COMEDIES

0-, 2 x
AC.1

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2162

0-,2x
AC.1
Comedies: Blow for
blow

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2x 2162
VISHWARADHYA JNANAMANDIR
(LIBRARY)
WADIMATH, VARANASI

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Contents

Name of Play	Description
Blow for Blow	Comedy Drama 1 Good low comedy each male of female 1 Good villain 1 Good appearance male lead 2 do do female lead
Our Boys	Comedy m 2 Good low comedy m & f 2 Good light comedy 1 Good old man lead
Partner for life	Comedy m 1 Good low comedy 1 " old man lead 1 juvenile do 2 do m & f
Hundred Thousand Pounds	Comedy m Good old man lead " juvenile do " light Comedy
Old Soldiers	Comedy m Low comedy man Light Comedy man
Old Sailors	Comedy m old man lead low comedy man light Comedy man
On Guard	Comedy m light Comedy man Villain
A Regular Fix	Farce 1 Good man Comedy
Cut off with 1/-	Comedietta old man 2 juveniles

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Acts	Scenes	Scenery needed	Characters Male	Female
Prologue & 3 Acts	6	4 Interiors. 1 Good Interior 1 Street	8	4
High life 3	3	2 good interiors 1 attic do	6	4
High life 3	3	3 Interiors one House	7	4
Middle class life 3	2	2 Interiors	8	4
High life 3	2	1 Exterior 1 Interior	6	3
High life 3	2	1 exterior 1 Interior	5	3
High life 3	3	1 Yacht Scene 2 Interiors	6	2
50 minutes 1	1	2 Interior	6	4
45 minutes 1	1	Interior	2	1

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1684
Acc. no.
JAGADGURU VISHW. HYA
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BLOW FOR BLOW

PROLOGUE.

SCENE.—*Mr. Josiah Craddock's Office, at Portsmouth. Glass doors,* R. C. *and* L., *leading to an outer office; high double desk,* L. C., *with stools; office table and chairs,* L. C.

CHARLEY SPRAGGS, *seated on stool, with back to audience, and the newspaper spread on desk before him*—BOLDER, *seated,* R. C.

BOLDER. (R. C.) Really it is very annoying to be kept waiting so long. (*pause*) I say, it is very annoying to be kept waiting so *long!* (*pause—aside*) That young man's so interested in his newspaper, that really I— (*takes out his watch*) Half-past two! (*in loud voice*) I say, it is *half-past two,* sir! (*slams his umbrella on stage*)

SPRAGGS. (*turns suddenly round, facing audience*) Well, sir, I'm very sorry—it ain't my fault.

BOLD. It's the third time I've called here and not been able to see Mr. Craddock; it looks as if he wished to avoid me. (SPRAGGS *is absorbed in newspaper*) I say it looks as if he wished to avoid me. That's an interesting case you're reading, I should say, young man?

SPRAG. Yes, sir, it is. The Bilston Bruiser *versus* Tommy Tussler. Most interesting case!

BOLD. In what court, may I ask?

SPRAG. Oh, not in any court! In an open field in the Home Circuit.

BOLD. Open field! Home Circuit! Who was the judge? Bramwell?

SPRAG. No—Leary Benjamin, of Mortlake!

BOLD. Never heard of *that* judge! What was the case?

SPRAG. Mutual assault and battery!

BOLD. (*aside*) What does he mean? (*aloud*) Damages heavy?

SPRAG. Tree-*menjous!* (*reads*) "At the conclusion of the forty-eighth round the Bilston Bruiser's countenance presented a dreadful appearance, whilst that of the gallant Tommy was no less remarkable as a specimen of the human face divine after a manly British set-to."

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BOLD. Confound it, sir; you've been reading about a prize-fight!

SPRAG. Who said I hadn't?

BOLD. Nice reading for a clerk, indeed!

SPRAG. Bless you, I glory in it! You may talk about your *Times*es, and your *Telegraphs*es, and your *Saturday Reviewers*es, and your *Family Heraldses*—give me the *Weekly Tipster!* What's the Reform Bill to me? I don't care whether Bill's reformed or he *ain't* reformed—so I don't care for reading about *him*. Then, as for "Foreign Intelligence," from what I know of foreigners, I don't think as they *have* any intelligence. No, sir, I prefer reading what interests me, and the subject of pugilism *do* interest me. Ain't self-preservation the first law of nature? Ain't self-*defence* self-preservation? Very well then! The first thing we do when we come into the world is to double our fists. Very well then! Why does Britannia go on a-triumphantly ruling of the waves? 'Cos she hits out straight with her left like a lady!

BOLD. Really, your arguments are quite thrilling, young man! Are you, yourself, an adept at the art?

SPRAG. No, sir. I'm a very good fighter in—hem!—in *theory*. I know the principles of the art thoroughly, but somehow I'm not so good at the practice. No, sir, whenever I get into a row—and I'm always doing that, in order to see how I'm a-getting *on*, you know—I square up scientific, but generally receive a "oner" which doubles me up just at the very moment when I'm about to show 'em the way to do it!

BOLD. That's a pity. (*rises*) Well, you'll be good enough to tell Mr. Craddock that I have called again—and for the last time. (*Music, piano*)

SPRAG. (*insinuatingly*) Oh, don't say *that*, sir.

BOLD. For the last time. Give him that letter, and tell him that also is the last he will receive. He will be in shortly, I have no doubt; see that he gets that letter the *instant* he comes in. Good day!

SPRAG. How precious particular we are!

(SPRAGGS *has got down to take the letter, and to show* BOLDER *out—when he has gone,* SPRAGGS *dances about in pugilistic attitudes, strikes door, then turns to tall office-stool, and repeats business, squaring at stool*)

Ha! would you? (*ducks his head*) Now, mind your os frontis—there! (*gives stool a tremendous whack—it falls—he dances back*) First knock-down blow to Spraggs. (*in attitude*) Time! (*Music stops*)

Enter KITTY, *door* L.

KITTY. Time, indeed! What are you doing, stupid?

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SPRAG. Looking triumphant at my prostrate foe! Halone I did it! Ahem—Shakespeare!

KITTY. I tell you what it is—your sporting propensities 'll lead you into trouble one of these days.

SPRAG. Bother! As the editor of the *Weekly Tipster* beautifully put it in the last number, "The proper study of mankind is muscle!" There's a biceps—feel it!

KITTY. Oh, rubbish! Any letter by the last London post?

SPRAG. Yes—here you are. (*gives her a letter*)

KITTY. That's right. Poor dear Miss Milly has been frettin' herself dreadful at not getting a letter from her sister for more than a week!

SPRAG. Well, I don't feel altogether comfortable at smuggling letters to Miss Milly from her sister, against Craddock's wish. If he knew as I was the means of keeping up a correspondence between Miss Milly and her sister Alice, as so disgraced herself, I should be in for it, I can tell you!

KITTY. Disgraced herself, indeed!—nothing of the kind! She certainly ran away with a fellow as wasn't worthy of her, but that's no reason master should have turned his back upon her, and forbid her twin sister, Mildred, as loved her better than herself, to even mention her name in the house. Oh, it's wrong to speak ill of people whose bread you're eating; but master's a flinty-'earted customer at the best! (*crosses*, R.)

SPRAG. (L.) Ah, well, I don't eat his bread. He pays me a pound a week; but I'd see his bread at Jericho afore I'd eat it!

KITTY. Well, don't quibble!

SPRAG. Why not—ain't I in the law? Though I'm honly a "houtsider," some day I may serve my articles.

KITTY. And very nicely you'll serve 'em, I'll warrant! Why, you think of nothing but horses, and dogs, and boat-races, and walking-matches, and—and——

SPRAG. I beg you pardon, Kitty; there's other matches, besides walking-matches, as I thinks of continual, my dear. (*his arm round* KITTY'S *waist*)

KITTY. Ah! you think a deal more of your betting than you do of me. You'll be robbing the till, like young Crosby, some day.

SPRAG. "Tills," Kitty, is confined to shops. I certainly do like a little speckelation; but where's the 'arm? (*putting his arm round her waist*)

KITTY. (*moving his arm*) Why, where it oughtn't to be. Don't be so familiar.

SPRAG. You'll change your tone, if the King of Clubs wins the Derby. He ain't first favourite; but I know a gentleman as knows a party who has a cousin what's very intimate with

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an individual—I say a *in*-dividual in his trainer's stable—bless you! the knowing ones there are all on him!

KITTY. All on him! why, they'll break his back!

SPRAG. Ah! you've no head for these matters. So I ventured my five bob on King of Clubs; and if he wins——

KITTY. Ah! he can't be much of a king for to let you put a crown on him.

SPRAG. Ha, ha! but you don't mean it! Why, Lieutenant Linden, who's here every day—he's a reg'lar swell, and mixes amongst the sporting nobs, and he tells me I'm all right. He's a gentleman is the Lieutenant—and *there*, ain't *he* got a biceps! But it's the sea air, I suppose, that makes those sailor fellows so strong and hardy.

KITTY. Oh, yes; there's nothing like the *sea* for *mussels*. He's a reg'lar love of a man, is Mr. Linden!

SPRAG. I say—I say——

KITTY. So he is. Why, here, he's only been in Portsmouth a fortnight, and not been acquainted with Miss Milly even as long as that, and there, she's as fond of him as if they'd known each other years. They'll make a match of it, and pretty sharp, too, take my word for it.

SPRAG. But, I say, Kitty, he's the heir to a baronetcy—he's a tremendous swell!

KITTY. Well, Miss Milly's good enough for him!

SPRAG. Yes; I don't say she isn't, but I shouldn't myself care for Craddock as a father-in-law—literally a father-in-*law*, in his case, eh, Kitty! (*goes up to desk*, L. C.)

KITTY. Bless us, how sharp we are! When once Miss Milly becomes Mrs. Linden—*Lady* Linden she *will* be some day—mind you, you'll see, she'll seek out her sister Alice, in London, and make her comfortable, in spite of her cross-grained old father.

SPRAG. Ah! they're not married yet.

KITTY. Well, I'm sure! (*crosses*, L.)

SPRAG. (*looking round*) Hem! Give us a kiss, Kitty—what we legal parties calls a refresher—come, now!

KITTY. Leave me alone, sir—you've been drinking!

SPRAG. No, I haven't taken anything to-day!

KITTY. Haven't you?—then, take that! (*slaps his face and breaks away*) There's proper times and proper places for all things in *this* life, Mr. Spraggs, and a party's office is *not* the place for to have one's cap rumpled in!

Exit KITTY, *arranging her cap, door* L.

SPRAG. (*looking at audience*) And ain't *she* got a biceps! (*Music, piano—squares, and looks about for something to fight at*) By Jove! if a man had only given me that slap! Come

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on! I could even summon up pluck to fetch Craddock a nobbler, if he was only to come in now.

Enter CRADDOCK, *door in flat,* R.—*he stands quietly watching* SPRAGGS, *who continues sparring, not seeing him.*

Come along, sir, don't be impatient, you shall have it directly! (*turns, still sparring, sees* CRADDOCK, *and flies on to his stool and commences writing violently*).

CRADDOCK. (*down,* R.) Are you often taken in that way, Mr. Spraggs?

SPRAG. Only exercising my limbs, sir. Gets a little cramped a-sitting so long, sir. Letter, sir, from Bolder and Green's. (CRADDOCK *seems annoyed—takes letter*) Mr. Bolder brought it himself, and seemed very much put out of the way too; said as——

CRAD. (*who has been reading*) Hold your tongue, fool!

SPRAG. Yes, sir. (*recommences writing*)

CRAD. (*reading*) "And unless you are prepared to hand over the money our client, Mrs. Benwell, intrusted to you, by next Saturday, we shall have no alternative but to institute criminal proceedings against you without delay." They mean it! Bolder never barks without biting. Curse the old woman and her money! Why did she ever come to *me* with it? It's a desperate thing to do; but I'll try it. I cannot doubt the word of an eminent physician like Doctor Renwick, and he has pronounced Captain Jackson a dying man. He can never live to reach Australia. I'll do it!

SPRAG. (*aside*) He's got no biceps, he ain't!

CRAD. Three thousand pounds! I could as soon hope to get a million. Disgrace—ruin—if I do not hand over to Bolder Mrs. Benwell's money by Saturday! Why do I hesitate? Jackson's on the sea—will never come back. Pshaw! (*wipes his forehead with handkerchief, and sits in chair at table,* R. C.) Everything wrong with me except Linden's love for Milly—that's one bright ray of hope. (*rises*) I must summon courage. Mr. Spraggs.

SPRAG. Yes, sir.

CRAD. You know Radley's Bank, in Grant Street?

SPRAG. Radley's Bank? Oh, yes, sir!

CRAD. (*with a deep-drawn breath—aside*) I wish you to go there and cash this cheque!

SPRAG. Yes, sir. Captain Jackson's cheque?

CRAD. (*sharply*) Yes, Captain Jackson's! You know his handwriting?

SPRAG. I know his signature.

CRAD. (*suspiciously*) Eh? Yes, of course! Lose no time! The cheque, you see, is for one thousand four hundred pounds.

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SPRAG. Lor! so it is. Do you think Radley's Bank's got as much as that handy, sir?

CRAD. (*with a forced laugh*) Oh, yes, more than that, my good fellow, at a push, I dare say! Tell them to give it you short.

SPRAG. Short! Yes, sir. (*takes hat and goes towards door —aside*) Don't half like having so much money about me.

CRAD. Mr. Radley and I once had a violent quarrel, and I declared I would never set foot in his bank again, or I would go myself. (*rises*) Be quick, Mr. Spraggs, if you please, and oblige me! (*crosses to* L. C.)

SPRAG. Certainly, sir! (*aside*) He's dreadful polite all of a sudden! Fourteen hundred pound—fourteen hundred weeks' salary all in a lump! *Exit* SPRAGGS, *door* R. C.

(CRADDOCK, *after a moment's irresolution, makes a movement after* SPRAGGS, *as if to call him back*)

CRAD. (*sitting*, R.) Bah! I'm losing my old nerve just at the very time, too, when I want all my courage, all my coolness. The homœopathic principle has saved me. Tempted by Mrs. Benwell's money, I speculate with it, and lose it; tempted by Captain Jackson's open cheque-book, I retrieve my loss, and pay back— (*very nervously*) Who's that?

Enter DRUMMOND, *door* R.

DRUM. It's only me! (CRADDOCK, *relieved, sighs*) You are nervous to day. (*goes to desk*, L.)

CRAD. Pah! (*takes up papers, and tries to become interested in them—Music ceases*)

DRUM. (*sits, left of* L. *desk*) That's the second time this week my entrance has appeared to throw you off your balance. (*mends a pen with knife*) You want change; you should take a holiday. I thought you were going to faint the other morning when I came in abruptly.

CRAD. (*turning to him*) What—when do you mean?

DRUM. Why, when you were writing so carefully—copying, it looked like. Tuesday morning, the day you sent me and Spraggs out for an hour—only I came back unexpectedly, you remember, you huddled all the papers up into a heap, locked your desk, and left the office. I remarked at the time you seemed nervous, and out of sorts. (*with pen in hand*) That's nibbed him!

CRAD. Only your fancy, John Drummond.

DRUM. Glad of it, sir—glad of it.

CRAD. And let me request you to be less observant of my actions in future. (*rises, goes towards desk, door* R.) I don't care to be watched, John Drummond. Attend to your own business, if you please. There is plenty for you to do in the

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office, without eavesdropping and prying. See that those letters to Megson and Clitheroe are sent off by post-time, or you'll find me less inclined than I *have* been to overlook negligence! *Exit, door* R.

DRUM. (*after a pause*) I don't care to be watched, John Drummond. Ha, ha! No, I dare say *not*, Josiah Craddock! And *why* not? Because you know you've—bah! What a fool you are, Josiah Craddock. What a short-sighted fool you are, man, and what a deep dog *you* are, John Drummond, my dear friend, what a *very* deep dog, and how very lucky it was you happened to come in at that particularly awkward juncture, and see what you *did* see, and think to secure what you *did* secure, Ha, ha! there, you are safe enough! What would our friend, Josiah, give for you, eh? What would he give for you?

Enter MILDRED, *door* L.

MILDRED. I thought Kitty was here.

DRUM. Kitty? No. Don't go, Miss Milly. I—a—I want to speak to you.

MIL. (*contemptuously*) *You!*

DRUM. *I.* Give me a minute or two. Your presence lights up the office!

MIL. Dear me! Quite complimentary, Mr. Drummond.

DRUM. Am I? I can't be as civil-spoken as *some* folks, but I can *mean ever* so much more. (*goes to and closes door*, L., *and stands with his back to it*) Wait a minute or so!

MIL. What are you doing?

DRUM. Just shutting the door—or some one might come in and interrupt.

MIL. Interrupt!

DRUM. (*seriously*) Mildred Craddock, I have something to say to you, something I've had on the tip of my tongue to say a hundred times, but never dared to do it.

MIL. (*aside*) What's this?

DRUM. Don't run away before I've spoken to you! I've been a long time screwing up my courage, Mildred, and even now I am afraid to speak my mind; but I can't conceal what I'm about to say any longer. It's driving me wretched, Mildred, downright wretched, and I must have it out! (MILDRED *makes an impatient movement to the door—he waves her back half imploringly*) Don't—don't leave me yet! Leave me, if you like, when I've spoken out, and never say a word to me again; but let me have my say, for the words will *choke* me if they don't get free!

MIL. (R. C.) You frighten me, John Drummond; *do* let me go?

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DRUM. (L. C.) From the first moment I saw you, Mildred Craddock, I loved you—loved you devotedly! Don't curl your lip in scorn at what I say! I'm a churlish, ill-conditioned, bad-mannered fellow, I know; but I've loved you better than my life, Mildred, oh, for *so* long, and I'd go through fire and water—I'd endure any suffering, any punishment, any *disgrace* to win one kind word from *you!* For you've never given me one tender look—never spoken one soft and gentle word to me! Mildred, (*advancing towards her*) don't look like that! (MILDRED *is gazing on vacancy with a contemptuous half-smile*) Say I may hope; give me but one little, tiny, trifle of encouragement. I'll wait, Mildred, patiently and humbly till you can grow to like me a little, little bit, but don't break my heart with a bitter refusal—don't make me wretched, Mildred, by some cruel cutting speech—don't spurn me for my insolence! (*taking her hand*) Mildred—Milly—look at me!

(MILDRED *thrusts away his hand in great scorn*—DRUMMOND'S *manner changes, he stands in the attitude in which her action has thrown him, his brow dark and lowering*)

MIL. (*in a cold voice*) This is the way you spoke to my sister Alice three years ago, John Drummond.

DRUM. (*his head hanging down*) Who told you that?

MIL. I knew it. Foolishly enough, poor girl, she believed you. You soon grew weary of her, poor trusting child!

DRUM. (*looking up*) I had not seen *you*, Mildred; at that time you were away in France. When you came home, it was not *my* fault that I discovered that what I had imagined love for Alice was but a passing fancy. I own I was dazzled for a time by Alice, but it was from her likeness to *you*, Mildred. You'll own I never wounded *her* pride by showing that you had supplanted her?

MIL. You waste time, John Drummond; I feel already lowered in my own estimation to think that I have permitted this interview. Let me pass, and never dare to touch upon this painful subject! (*she is about to go.*

DRUM. (*seizing her hand*) You don't go thus, Mildred. I am——

MIL. Let go your hold! Do not tempt me to say all that I *could* say!

DRUM. Say it!

MIL. Do not drive me to express the scorn, contempt, and hate I feel for you.

DRUM. (*holding her tightly*) Take care, Mildred Craddock!

MIL. I have nothing to fear from *you*. Why should I take care? It was in pique at *your* vile conduct that my twin sister Alice threw herself away upon Jonas Petherick, a ne'er-do-well and vagabond with a smooth tongue and handsome

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face. She married him in haste, in a fit of wayward and wounded pride, and is she not an outcast from her father's home—her name forbidden to be mentioned here—here—where she might have been happy *now*, but for *you*? *Let* me go, I say! (*throws off his hold by a violent effort, and crosses to* L.)

DRUM. I say again, take care, Mildred! I know well who has come between me and the happiness I should have known in your love.

MIL. (*returning*, C., *in great scorn*) My love for *you!*

DRUM. You fancy this young sailor gentleman intends to act honourably by you; you think he *means* all the fine speeches he makes you. You imagine he doesn't look upon you as a toy to trifle with and then throw aside. In a few days he will be gone, and you may never see him again, but I would never leave you, Mildred! (*advancing*) Young Linden will see another face that will soon make him forget *yours*; the flattering talk he has poured into your willing ears will suit another as well as *you*.

Enter LIEUTENANT LINDEN, *door in flat, he pauses on hearing his name; he carries a riding-whip.*

These sailors have sweethearts everywhere. Milly, don't look so pitilessly at me!

MIL. How dare you mention Mr. Linden's name!

DRUM. Why not? Why should I respect his name? You never spoke to me as you do now, before he came to visit here; you'll live to bitterly repent the day you first listened to him, and were dazzled by a vision of happiness that can only prove a dream, from which you'll wake to shame and sorrow, as surely as my name is John Drummond!

LINDEN. (*advances*) So your name is John Drummond, is it?

MIL. Mr. Linden——

LIND. Perhaps you'd better leave us, Miss Craddock; I shall be upstairs in a few moments, where I hope to see you, as I have something particular to say to you, after I have said something particular to Mr. John Drummond here. (*crosses*, L., *balancing his whip*)

MILDRED *looks irresolutely at* LINDEN, *and at a motion from him, exit, door* L.

And now, may I ask you what you mean by speaking in the way you have about a man of whom you can know nothing?

DRUM. (*sulkily*) And of whom I care to know nothing. I have no wish to talk with you—I've my work to do. (*about to pass to desk*)

LIND. (*intercepting him*) Stop, sir! I have *my* work to do

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as well. I am not an cavesdropper, but I couldn't help hearing what you said of me. (DRUMMOND *laughs a short, scornful laugh*) Come, Mr. John Drummond, as you call yourself, say you were carried away by excess of misplaced zeal, or the heat of the weather, or early dinner, or something. Come, say you are deeply sorry you were induced to speak in gross, insolent abuse of a person you didn't know, and that you beg that person's pardon.

DRUM. (*fiercely*) No! No

LIND. You won't, eh? Then take that, you slanderous hound!

(*seizes* DRUMMOND *and thrashes him—they struggle, ending in* LINDEN *dashing* DRUMMOND *from him—he falls on the ground moaning—Music during struggle—*LINDEN *after a pause crosses,* R.)

Phew! In future, Mr. John Drummond, you will doubtless keep a civil tongue in your head. Come, get up, man, and keep a guard upon your speech for the future. (*approaches as if to help him up*)

DRUM. (*shrinking from him, and in a low voice*) Don't come near me!—don't *touch* me!

LIND. Not *I!* (*goes towards door,* R.)

Enter CRADDOCK, *door,* R.

CRAD. (*aside*) Surely I heard a—ha! Mr. Linden, how do you do? (*shakes hands*)

LIND. I've just had to transact some rather unpleasant business.

(DRUMMOND *has now risen and slouched towards his desk, where he rests his head on his arm, his back towards audience—*LINDEN *and* CRADDOCK *down,* R. C.)

Is that fellow your clerk?

CRAD. Yes, my confidential clerk.

LIND. Ha! then I have given him a lesson that will teach him to be even more confidential in future, and not blurt out atrocious sentiments *pro bono publico.*

CRAD. (*aside,* R.) What does he mean? (*goes up to table for a bundle of letters*)

LIND. (*aside,* C.) I may as well have it out at once and get it over, though upon my life now I've come to the point, I feel half afraid, but I can't bear suspense about Milly any longer. (*to* CRADDOCK) Mr. Craddock; you know who I am and what I am. When my poor old dad departs this life, which I hope may not be any time these *ever* so many years, I shall be a baronet. I—a—love your daughter, Miss Mildred—you must have seen I do—though I've known her so short a time, I'm vain enough to think she cares a bit for *me.* Now

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you'd have forbidden my coming to the house if you'd objected to me, I'm sure. Well, well, say you *don't* object to me. Now the question is, do you object to me so little that—that—confound it, I'm making a sad bungle of the business, but I never did it before. Will you, in short, give your permission to my marrying Mildred, if she'll have me? I am a sailor, and roughish perhaps, but I'll make her a good husband. I will, Mr. Craddock, upon my soul, I will!

CRAD. I believe you, Mr. Linden I have observed your fancy for my Milly, and I am honoured by it. (*crosses*, R. C.) If she consents—and if I can read a woman's looks, I am sure she will—take her, my dear boy, and if you can't write and tell Sir Harry that you are going to bring him a daughter-in-law of equal rank with yourself, you can at all events tell him in all truth, that she is a lady, and as good a girl as ever lived. (*wipes his eyes*)

LIND. (*shakes his hand*) Thank you, Mr. Craddock, thank you heartily. I'll go up and speak to Milly at once! (*shakes hands again*) You won't repent this! I'm so happy—damme, I could even shake hands with Drummond here.

Goes towards DRUMMOND, *who shrinks from him, then laughingly exit, door* L.

CRAD. (*moves round towards* DRUMMOND) What does that mean?

DRUM. (*lifts up his head for the first time, his face, which has been hidden by his arm, is now deadly pale*) It means that he lashed me as he would have done a refractory cur. The game is at present in the hands of your would-be son-in-law; the tables may turn. We shall see! we shall see!

CRAD. Why do you say "*would-be* son-in law?" The lieutenant has my consent—will shortly have my daughter's!

DRUM. There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip. Difficulties *may* arise. What if Mrs. Benwell's money—the money you held in trust for her, and which is so difficult to call in—you invested it so *very* carefully—what I say, if that money isn't forthcoming? Bolder and Green seem suspicious.

CRAD. (*who has started slightly, and looked round uneasily, assumes a forced calmness*, DRUMMOND *eyeing him sideways*) It *will* be forthcoming. Before starting for Australia, Captain Jackson paid me a large sum of money I had lent him years ago.

DRUM. Lucky you got it when you did! The man can't live a month. They sent him a long sea voyage as a last resource, but he'll never reach Melbourne alive.

CRAD. (*aside, smiling grimly*) I know it, and I am safe! (*aloud to* DRUMMOND) And why should *you* and Mr. Linden quarrel?

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DRUM. What if we were rivals? (*comes to front of door*)

CRAD. Rivals? (*starting up*) Do you dare to tell me *my daughter*, Mildred, has ever——

DRUM. (*hurriedly*) No, no, no, make your mind easy there! She despises me as much as you do. (CRADDOCK *goes to seat*, L. *of* R. *table—aside*) The greater my triumph when the time to turn and strike arrives.

CRAD. (*with a sigh of relief, sitting*) I could have sworn as much. Mildred has a proper pride, and would never disgrace herself and wring my heart as her bad, ungrateful sister Alice did. You know I closed my doors against *her* when she thwarted all my hopes, and linked herself with a scoundrel. Stick to your work, and never let me hear again a whisper of such wild rubbish! (*Music*)

Enter KENWARD, SERGEANT BRENT *and* CHARLEY SPRAGGS.

CRAD. (*aside, at his papers*) 'Tis time Spraggs returned, quite time. I hope—— (*Music ceases*)

KEN. (R.) Mr. Craddock, I wish to speak a word with you.

CRAD. (*turns, starts aside*) Kenward, the bank manager! (*aloud*) Certainly.

KEN. Your clerk has presented a cheque at our bank for one thousand four hundred pounds!

SPRAG. (*addressing no one in particular*) Whereupon I'm immediately collared by a party with a biceps, which I will simply denominate as——

BRENT. Shut up! (SPRAGGS *collapses*)

CRAD. Well, Mr. Kenward?

KEN. He tells us that he was sent with it by you.

SPRAG. Why, of course. I——

BRENT. (*pushing him aside*) Will you be quiet?

KEN. Hem! Sent by you, Mr. Craddock?

CRAD. (*after drawing a deep breath, aside*) Yes.

KEN. Hem! You received that cheque——

CRAD. (*hastily*) From Captain Jackson, before he sailed.

KEN. You are sure you are making no *mistake*? (*looking at* CRADDOCK *straight in the face*)

CRAD. (*looks at him, then drops his eyes*) Quite sure!

KEN. For I regret to say it is a forgery!

CRAD. Forgery! Impossible!

KEN. Whilst almost on the point of starting on a voyage which his friends and well-wishers knew, poor fellow, must be the last he'll ever take in his life, Captain Jackson discovered that an unfilled draft had been torn from his chequebook. He discovered it quite by accident, but he is a most methodical, cautious man, and immediately communicated with us, informing us that whoever filled the cheque was pre-

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sented the person bringing it should be detained. The cheque *has* been presented by your clerk—you admit having sent him, and——(*shrugging his shoulders*)

CRAD. (*who has been endeavouring to master his emotion, bursts out violently*) Mr. Kenward! Beware, sir! Do you know whom you are addressing? Are you aware that this amounts to an accusation of forgery against *me?*

KEN. I am compelled to form that conclusion. (*Music*)

CRAD. Do you venture, on the word of a dying man, who is, no doubt a victim to some hallucination, to come here, and—you must be mad, sir!

KEN. It is certainly a most painful and unpleasant business, but——

CRAD. (*blustering*) Painful and unpleasant! Why, there is no one to support you in this shameful supposition!

DRUM. (*at desk,* L., *quietly*) Yes, there is *one!* (CRADDOCK *starts violently*) Craddock *did* forge Captain Jackson's name!

CRAD. (*makes a movement towards* DRUMMOND—*recovers himself*) What!

DRUM. You know I came in suddenly when you expected not to be interrupted. When you huddled away the papers, and thought I had seen nothing; but I've sharp eyes, as you've often said; and when you whisked the paper into a drawer and locked it, you forgot *one* thing, Josiah Craddock! When you left the room, which you did hurriedly, I pounced upon the *blotting-paper* (CRADDOCK *starts*) which you had hastily pressed down upon the writing. I tore off the piece with the sham signature of Launcelot Jackson scarcely dry upon it. Here it is! (*aside*) And now Lieutenant Linden, take your forger's daughter to your heart, and be happy in your choice!

CRAD. (*after an inward struggle*) Lying scoundrel! I'll——(*rushes at* DRUMMOND, *but is intercepted by* BRENT, *who after a brief struggle, places the handcuffs on him*)

BRENT. Sorry for it, but it's a painful dooty!

SPRAG. (*at back*) Well I—if I ever! Oh, laws!

CRAD. (*aside*) There's no hope, not a shadow. (*seated*)

KEN. (*aside*) I always mistrusted the man, but never guessed he could have done a deed like this.

LIND. (*heard without,* L.) Come along, Milly. Nay, no hanging back, lass! Come along, my love!

CRAD. (*shuddering*) Mildred! Oh, agony! (*averts his head in shame*)

Enter LINDEN, *door* L., *joyously, and half dragging in* MILDRED *by the hand.—He has his back to the others as he enters, and does not see them at first.*

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LIND. (*entering*) Come along, my lass! She's said "Yes,"

Craddock, and I've made her come to repeat it here. Ha, ha! It'll seem more legal and binding, and all that sort of thing, if she—— (*turns*) What's the matter.

MIL. What—papa! Are you ill? (*looking at the others*) What is it?

KEN. I'm very sorry, Miss Craddock, but Mr. Craddock is arrested on suspicion—suspicion, mind—of forgery. (MILDRED *staggers, clasping her brow—aside*) This is terrible! Poor girl!

LIND. But—but—there must be some mistake, Mr. Craddock. I——

DRUM. There's no mistake! The evidence against him will be convincing. You see, he dare not even meet his daughter's eye.

MIL. (*rushing to her father*) No, no! it isn't true,—it isn't true, dear—say—(*sees the handcuffs*) Ha! (*recoils in horror*) Look there! On his wrists! (*her head falls on her hands in grief and shame*)

CRAD. (*aside to* BRENT *in a cold voice*) Take me away—this is killing me!

LIND. (*aside—his hand to his head*) It seems a dream; only a few minutes back we were so happy, too.

DRUM. (*aside,* L.) It stings him! But the debt I owe you isn't paid you yet, Lieutenant. You shall have back blow for blow, with interest, be sure.

LIND. (*touching her*) Milly—Milly—speak to me!

MIL. (*in a constrained voice*) You had better leave us, now that this sad disgrace has fallen on us—we— *after a struggle*) we must part; forget your foolish fancy, Mr. Linden, and try to—to— (*her head sinks on her hands again, completely overcome*)

LIND. Part! No such thing! I'll move heaven and earth to clear your father of this foul charge; and if I *don't* succeed, why, all the more reason I should keep my word with *you.*

(MILDRED *starts up from her father, and turns to* LINDEN *in joyful surprise*)

DRUM. What! would you marry her now?

LIND. Yes, I would, and *will!* She may be the daughter of a felon, but she shall be an *honest man's wife!*

(*puts his arm round her, and draws her closely to him—she looks up to his face—he kisses her—she sinks back in his arm, faint*—CRADDOCK'S *head bowed, leaning on his arm, weeping—Music loud at close.*

END OF PROLOGUE.

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ACT I.

SCENE.—*Alice Petherick's Lodgings in Lambeth, very poorly furnished. Rough deal dresser with plates, dishes, tea-things; table and chairs; fireplace,* R.; *teapot and kettle; handsomely-framed portrait of Mildred on wall or over chimney-piece,* R.; *door,* R.

DR. GRACE *and* MRS. MOULSEY *discovered.*

DR. GRACE. I confess there is something about the young woman that strangely interests me. I can assure you, in the course of my life, as a doctor in poor neighbourhoods, I have come across some strange romances in real life, Mrs. Moulsey—some very strange romances.

MRS. MOULSEY. I've no doubt of that, sir.

DR. G. How long did you say Mrs. Petherick had lodged with you, ma'am?

MRS. M. Well, about a twelvemonth now, doctor.

DR. G. She had only one child, I think?

MRS. M. Only one. It died soon after she came here, and she seems to have grown more settled-like since then. Never cries, though—sits here sometimes a-staring at that picture of herself till I've sometimes spoken to her half a dozen times before she knowed I was present, and when she woke up like—ah! well, there!

DR. G. (*going to portrait over chimney-piece*) It's very well painted too. Quite a work of art. It's very like her!

MRS. M. Yes, only more cheerfuller. Not that it's surprising as Mrs. Petherick looks low and wretched—poor thing, she's half-starved in my opinion, and she sews till it's a wonder to me sometimes as she's an eye in her head, which she have two, and each is piercers. Only see how they flashed the other day when I hinted at her writing to her relations for assistance, why, she up and—ah! well, there! (*Music till* ALICE *is on*)

DR. G. There's her foot on the stairs—light enough, poor thing—light enough!

Enter ALICE, *door* L., *dressed plainly in shabby half-mourning—she carries a parcel containing needlework, and seems wearied—she crosses behind table, and sinks into chair,* R. *of it.*

MRS. M. (R. of ALICE, *assisting her with her bonnet and shawl*) Them stairs is very trying, ain't they?

ALICE. I shall be all right directly, Mrs. Moulsey—a little out of breath, that's all. It's a long stretch to Madame Molina's.

(MRS. MOULSEY *busies herself at back by hanging up bonnet and shawl*)

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Dr. G. (*advances to her*) Sorry to see you so fatigued, Mrs. Petherick.

Alice. (*brightens*) Ah, Dr. Grace, how do you do? The sight of your kind face always revives one.

Dr. G. (*sitting* L. *of table, a little in front of it*) That's a very pretty compliment, Mrs. Petherick. I must tell that to Mrs. Grace when I get home. It will let her know that I am appreciated by my patients, whatever I may be in the domestic circle. Ha, ha!

Mrs. M. (*at dresser at back*) Ah, Doctor, you will have your little joke!

Dr. G. (*taking snuff*) It's my only luxury—a cheap one, Mrs. Moulsey. I try my best to keep a cheerful spirit, ma'am, and it's no very easy task, I assure you. I don't see much to make me merry in my day's round. (*sighs*) How's the appetite now? (*to* Alice, *and feeling her pulse*)

Alice. Oh, pretty well.

Mrs. M. (*behind* Alice *leaning over her*) Pretty well, indeed! Then you eat somewhere else—not here! (*goes back to dresser again*)

Alice. I'm better, doctor—I'm sure I'm better!

Dr. G. (*holding her pulse*) Ha!—terrible lack of vital power! Hem!—have you no friends who——

Alice. None but such as are poor as I am.

Mrs. M. (*coming to corner of table, behind* Alice) Them two as comes to see you enlivens you generally, specially the young man, Mr. Spraggs. I like him, I must say. (*goes up again, and is going slowly towards door*)

Alice. Two old friends—one of them once my father's servant, Doctor, who——(*pauses abruptly*)

Dr. G. (*aside*) Her father's servant! I was sure she had been in a respectable position. (*aloud*) Mrs. Moulsey, would you be good enough to send your boy Tommy round with this letter to my house?—I forgot to leave it.

Mrs. M. (L. *of* Dr. Grace) Suttingly, Doctor, suttingly. (*aside to him*) Don't talk to her about her relations—'cos if you *do*—ah, well, there! *Exit, door* L.

Dr. G. Mrs. Petherick, I have watched you for a long time, and your case has interested me extremely. I know I shall not be considered as patronising, because for my attendance on your child you paid me—paid me amply. That, however, was some time ago, and since then—I say since then, I have observed——

Alice. Doctor Grace, my kind friend, I know what you are about to say—I *am* cruelly poor; but I have no one but myself to work for now. You tell me I am weak—that I am getting even weaker: I know what that means! I shall

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drag on to the end, and—and when that comes, I shall neither shrink from it, nor welcome it; the world has no charms for me; life no object!

DR. G. This is a morbid feeling, Mrs. Petherick. A young woman like you should not look on life as a burden. You have no parents?

ALICE. My mother died when I was a child. (*excitedly*) My father drove me from his door—thrust me from him, with a curse upon his lips—flung me forth at the very time he knew I was most helpless, after my hasty, thoughtless marriage with a man he despised—with a man who cared little for me, as was proved too soon, for he left me—left me here in London with my child!

DR. G. And he——

ALICE. (*with intensity*) Found his reward in the avenging sea. He was drowned, together with a whole ship's crew, in a storm on the Atlantic. (*rising and speaking wildly*) I wonder did he see his wife and child—did he see the pale face of the helpless babe that called him "father" as the waves rolled over and engulphed him, and he sunk? Did he hear no sound but the raging waters? Was no weak cry of a dying infant in his ears, as the wild sea swept him to its fatal depths! (*pauses*) But all this is painful to me, and to you it can only be——(*sinks listlessly into her seat again*)

DR. G. You have surely known some bitter disappointment—more than this great trouble—some hard trial in early life, since your portrait there was painted; that was a happy look, Mrs. Petherick, I should like to see the expression that face wears once more on yours.

ALICE. That is not my portrait, doctor,

DR. G. No! It is strangely like you!

ALICE. It is that of a twin sister.

DR. G. Who is——

ALICE. Who is dead. We loved each other deeply, devotedly. You could not imagine how strong the affection was between us. My greatest happiness was in gratifying her every wish; the slightest suffering she endured was sure to find its fellow pang in my heart! (*rises, goes to portrait, clasping her hands*) I loved her far more even than she ever knew—my darling, darling Mildred! But she is not lost to me! She died five years ago, whilst her husband, who was in the Navy, was abroad; but I see her gentle eyes, and hear her pleasant, tender voice—so unlike mine. I see her, and I hear her, Doctor, every day, every night, and— (*after looking round fearfully, in a deep voice, as she returns to, and sinks into her chair*) I shall soon be with her.

DR. G. (*aside*) If I could only devise something to get the

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poor girl away from this depressing place! (*rises and comes* C.) I shall not see you, Mrs. Petherick, for a week or two; I am going into Gloucestershire on my annual visit to an old friend's house. My old friend, who was a baronet, and a great man in his county, is dead; but his son, who, by the way, I assisted into the world, *will* have his father's old school-fellow down as usual; and, I assure you, my yearly out rubs the rust off wonderfully—I am a very keen sportsman. The young baronet has married a charming young wife, quite a belle I hear—quite a belle. (*sees* ALICE *is absorbed*) She's in the clouds—in the clouds.

Enter KITTY, *door* L.—*she stops short at the door, seeing* DR. GRACE.

KITTY. Oh, lawks! didn't know as any one was here.

ALICE. (*rises, brightening up*) Oh, come in, Kitty. It's only my old friend Kitty, who has always been so kind and good. (*meets* KITTY, C., *behind table*—KITTY *takes off her bonnet and shawl*—ALICE *seems enlivened by* KITTY'S *presence*)

DR. G. (*aside,* L. C.) That Kitty, whoever she is, has a good face. Next to the green fields, give me a pretty girl's figure-head. (*to* KITTY, *who comes down,* L. *of him*) That's right, my dear, come and see Mrs. Petherick as often as you can, it'll do her good.

KITTY. (L., *curtseys*) Thank you, sir. I'd be here much oftener, only I can't get out just when I please. (*aside, as* DR. GRACE *joins* ALICE, R. C,) What a nice old gentleman! for all the world like father, only a good deal more soberer-looking.

DR. G. (*to* ALICE) Cheerful companionship's the thing for you, Mrs. Petherick; an hour or two a day with Miss Kitty here (*turning to* KITTY), would be invaluable. (*pinches her cheek*)

Enter SPRAGGS *door* L., *suddenly; he seems annoyed at the* DOCTOR'S *familiarity.*

SPRAG. Hem!

(KITTY *starts and gets over to* R. C., *as the* DOCTOR *goes up* R. *with* ALICE)

ALICE. Ha! Charley! How are you? Come in. (SPRAGGS *advances,* L. C., *eyeing* KITTY) Now don't run away, Kitty.

DR. G. Mrs. Petherick, may I have a word with you?

ALICE. Certainly. Come with me.

DR. GRACE *takes his hat and brings from his pocket his note-book, and he and* ALICE *go round behind table and* [illegible] *door.*

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SPRAG. (L. C.) Kitty—hem! Miss Wobbler!

KITTY. (R. C.) Charley—hem! Mr. Spraggs, that's to say, begging his pardon (*curtseys*), C. Spraggs, *Esquire*.

SPRAG. Ha! I don't think you *did* see Spraggs, Esquire. Who's that old rhododendrum? (*squaring*) I'd punch his 'ed if he was'nt "aged."

KITTY. Do please keep your low, stablery observations for your sportive friends!

SPRAG. Oh! I suppose when I bursts into a room sudden, and see the chin of my 'eart in the 'ands of another, I'm to grin and bear it. But I just shan't—I shan't grin, and I shan't bear it, and if you're a-going to promenade about the world a-letting society in general, and old gentlemen in particular, pinch your chin, why then, you and me parts, Katherine Wobbler.

KITTY. (*advances to him*) Who cares? Part away! There's as good fish in the sea as ever come out of it, I know!

SPRAG. What do *you* know about the sea?

KITTY. Everything! I kept company with a *marine* once.

SPRAG. Yes, I remember him—a marine! neither one thing nor t'other!

KITTY. Oh! wasn't he though?

SPRAG. I very well remember as he hadn't no *biceps* on his arm.

KITTY. No; 'cos they don't have them till they're made corporals.

SPRAG. Hoh! the ignorance of the girl! Hoh! well; I *would* have a soldier or a sailor, not a hamphiberous hanimal.

KITTY. Who are you a-calling hamfibborus? He was in a profession.

SPRAG. So am I.

KITTY. What?

SPRAG. The Turf.

KITTY. Call *that* a profession?

SPRAG. Course I do. I've got two or three irons in the fire. First place, I'm engaged to——

KITTY. You're engaged to *me*—you know it, Charley,—you ain't going to deceive me?

SPRAG. Deceive you! I'd see you *farther* first.

KITTY. Ah! it's all very well to say that, when you know I'm a *orphan*.

SPRAG. No—I'm engaged to Captain Crasher; then, my *other* iron, if that comes out all right, blow Captain Crasher—only I can't afford to blow Captain Crasher at present—not until I hear how the great Heidelgräffen lottery turns out.

KITTY. The great idle *what?*

SPRAG. The great Heidelgräffen German lottery! There! I've been and let it out, when I meant to keep it quiet, in case my chance turned up a blank. They *do* sometimes, you know.

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KITTY. What *are* you a-talking about?

SPRAG. Why, something as I was put on by Jem Grigson, a party as you don't know. He's a wonderful lucky fellow, Jem *is*; everything he touches turns up trumps. Puts his money on a hoss—hoss wins! talks to a gal for ten minutes—gal falls in love with him! goes to see a *haunt* in the country—*haunt* in the country pops off the 'ooks, and leaves Jem hall 'er property within a month! Now, Jem puts into a big German lottery every year reg'lar—he's drawn a prize once—and this year he's let me buy half his chance—risk, ten bob—*possible* prize, five thousand pound! Jem's to hear how it turns out to-day.

KITTY. Five thousand pound indeed! what would you do with five thousand pound?

SPRAG. Put hevery penny of it on "Jessie Brown."

KITTY. Who's she?

SPRAG. Who's *she?* why the favourite, sure—she's on everybody's lips just now.

KITTY. I dare say she is—a hussey!

SPRAG. (C.) She ain't a hussey—she's a *hossey!* (KITTY *turns away*, R., *indignant*) That's deuced good. Now I never thing of these things when I'm at the "Sociable Dandelions" of a Saturday night; and there's that himpostor Wagstaff considered a downright wit, and all along of a few low riddles. Why is a somethink like a somethink else?—call *that* clever?

KITTY. You're always talking so mysterus.

SPRAG. No, I ain't. (KITTY *and* SPRAGGS *go up wrangling*)

Enter ALICE, *door* L.

ALICE. (*from behind table*) Now then, you two, you're at your lovers' quarrels again, eh? I wish you'd get married, and as the old story-books say, "live happy ever afterwards." (*goes to dresser and lays the tea things*)

KITTY. It's Charley—he's so aggrawating.

SPRAG. (*going to* L.) It ain't me at all—it's you as nags.

KITTY. (R. C.) "Nags," indeed! More of your "hossey" language—I hate it.

SPRAG. Ha!—*marine* conversation's more in your line, eh? I suppose you'd like me to talk about nothink but marlin spikes, and broadsides, and salt junk, and old Tom Bowling, and like me wishing to have my timbers shivered.

KITTY. No, that I'm sure I shouldn't. (*turns up—to* ALICE *who has laid the tea things, and is now bringing the kettle to the table*) Let me help you. (*she assists* ALICE *to prepare the tea, while* SPRAGGS *sits*, R. C., *and produces his betting book*)

ALICE. I quite want my tea, Kitty.

KITTY. That's a good hearing. It'll be a comfort to see you

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take something, and a novelty too. (*to* SPRAGGS, *hitting him on the back*) Now, stupid, where's the tea?

SPRAG. Here. (*giving her a packet*)

KITTY. Why, this is backer, you nasty thing!

SPRAG. Oh, you're so particular—here's the tea—one's quite as strong as the other, I know. (*producing tea*)

KITTY. I brought half a pound, dear; I know you like a good strong cup of tea, and the young man at Mivens's tea mart, as serves me, always throws in an extra dash of Pekoe for *me*—a fine young man he *is* too, with such a heye.

ALICE. Now if you do this again, Kitty, I'll be downright angry with you—you regularly *keep* me in tea.

(KITTY *goes to fire*)

SPRAG. Yes, and she reg'lery keeps *me* in hot water.

KITTY. What do you mean by that?

SPRAG. What do you mean by flinging young men at Mivens's tea mart, with a *heye*, at me? He may have a *heye*, but he ain't got a biceps!

(KITTY *now cuts the bread and butter, having poured the water on to the tea in the tea-pot.**

KIT. Now you shall sit still and be waited on. (*pushing* ALICE *into her chair, then resuming her cutting bread and butter*) The tea'll be ready in *no* time. Does that dear old doctor say you're better?

ALICE. I wish I could work a little harder. As it is, I find it difficult to get on at all sometimes, my head swims so, and when I try and fix my eyes on my work, I see other things—scenes of bygone days rise before me—forms of those I shall never see again appear to be here at my side—and familiar voices, that are hush'd for ever, ring in my ear, and drive me well-nigh frantic.

(KITTY, *who has been sorrowfully watching* ALICE *during the end of her speech, now drops the knife and gets round to* R. *of* ALICE—*kneeling beside her, puts her arm round her waist*)

KITTY. Don't dear; don't give way! "It's a long lane as has no turning." And so it is with you, dear. You've had a long lane of misery and trial; but it's not for ever. Misfortune gets tired of afflicting us in time, and gives it up as a bad job, dear. Come, pluck up, there's a love, and let me hear

---

* *Dresser.* *Window.*

KITTY.

Fire.

ALICE. *Table.* SPRAGGS. *Door, L.*

R.

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you say you'll try and get well and strong, in your old, bright, cheery voice of years ago!

ALICE. My old voice of years ago has gone with my old looks and my old light heart. (*takes* KITTY'S *hands, and places her own arm round* KITTY'S *neck*) I never know a moment's joy except when you come to see me, Kitty. You are the only gleam of sunshine that ever wanders into this poor, gloomy place; and why you should come, I can hardly tell; for I only make you wretched. Kitty dear! Why *do* you come and see me?

KITTY. Why? Do you forget, long years ago, how good you were to me? Do you forget that your dear sister, Mildred—(ALICE *shades her eyes with her hand*) There, there! I declare I won't come and see you again unless you try and bear up a bit! (*kisses* ALICE *on the forehead, and rises and gets round to her place, speaking as she does so—aside*) Well, I sometimes think as *I've* got little enough to make me happy, but—(*sees* SPRAGGS *sitting abstracted—hits him on the back*) why don't you make yourself useful?

SPRAG. (*tearfully*) I wish you wouldn't strike me when you know I'm overcome. Ain't *you* got a biceps?—that's all!

KITTY. (*seated, and pouring out tea*) A great hulking fellow—always in the way!

ALICE. No, no! Never mind—she doesn't mean it:

SPRAGS. She might just as well mean it while she's about it. She hurts just as much as if she did.

KITTY. There's your tea, dear; there's *your* tea, stupid! Now you'll be wanting bread and butter, I shouldn't wonder!

SPRAG. Call that a cup of tea?

KITTY. (*filling it up*) There now!

SPRAG. I should like some sugar and some milk. Ain't you got a spoon in the fam'ly?

KITTY. (*gives some*) Dear, I gave him plenty. (*she helps him*) Go on! It's quite cosy and pleasant! But, do you know, I had quite an alarm to-day?

ALICE. Had you, dear?

KITTY. (*sipping her tea, not noticing* ALICE *or* SPRAGGS) Yes; I was just turning the corner of the street, after leaving Madame's, and I brushed quite close against a man who reminded me so of John Drummond.

(ALICE *starts violently, and appears overcome*—SPRAGGS *notices this, and endeavours by extravagant gestures to catch* KITTY'S *eye, and stop her, but she is not observing either, and goes on*)

Give me a man as speaks out; not one of your sneaking, underhand sort, as you never know whether they're sneering at you or not. That John Drummond was one of your quiet

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sort—and a cruel one, too—he was a terrible cruel one. I remember one day—as if it was yesterday—I was a——

SPRAGGS, *finding it impossible to stop* KITTY, *suddenly chokes over his tea*—KITTY *jumps up, and thumps his back, after which he partly recovers*)

You're a nice young man for a small tea-party, *you* are! Where's your manners, a-choking in your tea like a hinfant? What *are* you nodding your head and winking like a tommyton for?

SPRAG. (*aside to her*) Don't you see as you've touched on a tender subject? Don't talk about John Drummond; you don't know the history——

KITTY. Why didn't you stop me, then? (*sits—to* ALICE, *who is resting her head on her hand*) Now, dear, take your tea. Well, as I was a-saying, bless my heart, how mistaken we *can* be! when I looked again, it was no more *like* him than I'm like the Queen of Otaheite—not like him a bit, dear. (*aside, to* SPRAGGS) It *was* him, Charley, as sure as we're a-sitting here!

SPRAG. (*aside*) Oh, woman, woman! what lies you *can* tell, and how innocent you *can* look when you're a-telling 'em!

ALICE. I was a little startled at the mention of John Drummond's name, Kitty; but it is nothing. I can never hope to see him again, for many, many reasons.

KITTY. (*aside, to* SPRAGGS) She's never heard that it was *his* evidence, principally, as her father was transpor—— (*seeing the door open a little, screams*) Ha!

SPRAG. (*startled, nearly drops his cup*) Ho! wh—what is it now?

KIT. Oh, I thought I saw the door a-moving!

ALICE. (*cheerfully*) I tell you what it is, Kitty, your tea's too strong, dear; it's making us all nervous.

(*during the next speech* MRS. MOULSEY *enters quietly, unobserved by* SPRAGGS, *she approaches him and touches him on the shoulder at end of his speech*)

SPRAG. Nervous! Ha, ha! that's rather rich. No, I don't think the young gentleman with the heye capable of serving out any tea as would make *me* nervous. Nerves is my strong point. I'm not one of——(MRS. MOULSEY *touches him on the shoulder, he collapses—in great fear*) Oh, law! (KITTY *and* ALICE *burst out laughing*)

MRS. M. Beg pardon, Mr. Spraggs, you're wanted a moment.

SPRAG. Wa—wanted!

KITTY. Your new master, Capting Crasher, wants you, perhaps.

SPRAG. Captain Crasher's out of town.

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Mrs. M. No, the party as wants you don't look much like a hofficer.

Sprag. Not an officer of the Sheriff?

Mrs. M. No; he's a kind of sportin'-looking gent—dressed for all the world like—an! well, there. Here's a bit of a note he's sent you. (*gives it him*)

Sprag. Kitty, I've a presentiment.

Alice. Of good fortune, let us hope. It's good news, take my word for it.

Sprag. (*having read the letter*) Oh! (*sinks in seat*)

Kitty. (*alarmed, rises and goes to him*) Charley!

Mrs. M. (*going towards door*) Ah!—well there!

Exit Mrs. Moulsey, *door* L.

Sprag. You're as good as a witch, Mrs. Petherick. Listen. (*reads*) "Charley, my ancient Briton." (*looks tearfully at* Alice *and* Kitty) That's *me*, ladies—I'm the ancient Briton.

Kitty. Yes, only dressed very different.

Sprag. I can't go on—read it, Kitty. (*sits*)

Kitty. (*reads*) "Charley, my ancient Briton, my old look again——" His old look!

Sprag. Luck, he means.

Kitty. Hoh! (*reads*) "Our number has turned up a—P—R—Y—S."

Sprag. A prize!—now wasn't I right?

Kitty. "A prize! We have drawn a thou!" A thou? What does he mean—a pig?

Sprag. (*jumping up*) A thousand pounds! Ha, ha! *Now* what's my sportin' 'abits brought me, eh? Ha, ha! (*dances about*)

Kitty. Phew! (*reads*) "Come to the 'King's Arms,' where awaits your friend and partner, Jem."

Alice. (*rises and shakes hands with* Spraggs, L. C.) I'm so glad, Charley.

Sprag. Thank'ee, I'm sure you are. (*to* Kitty) Now, what do you say of Jem?

Kitty. (C.) Why, Jem's a—a—Jem-man.

Alice. (*going up,* R.) Ha, ha! Kitty, you're quite cle[illegible]

(Alice *here clears away the tea things, preparatory for a scene with* Drummond)

Sprag. Kitty, Kitty, you are witty! Ahem!—poetry! (*goes up, his legs giving way under him in his excitement*—Kitty *goes up for bonnet and shawl*—Spraggs *advances,* L. C., *stands with open arms*) Katherine! (Kitty *has come down,* R., *they embrace,* C.—*aside to* Kitty) First thing, when we get the money, will be to do something for Alice, Kitty.

Kitty. (*aside to him*) Charley, you speaks my sentiments. (*goes up to* Alice, *behind table*) I must go round with Charley,

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dear, and see if the news is *true*. Besides, if he's left to himself, he'll go tumbling off a bridge, or a-walking into a canal, or something, for he's quite flustered with his good fortune. But we'll come back and tell you, dear. (*kisses* ALICE)

ALICE. Mind you do, Kitty. I shall be quite anxious.

SPRAG. Tar-tar, for the present. (*going with* KITTY, *arm-in-arm, towards door*) Was I right about Jem? You thought as he was to be despised; but, as the poet says, "Full many a *Jem* of purest ray"—all serene.

KIT. Oh, go along! *Exeunt* KITTY *and* SPRAGGS, *door* L.

ALICE. Now they'll be happy? Do I envy them? No; I will try and make an effort to be happy too. I will endeavour to forget the past, and take kind Dr. Grace's advice—if I can. (*sits thoughtfully,* R. *of table*) John Drummond!—(*Music piano*) And after all these years! She says that she was mistaken—that it was *not* he. Well! Does Time, the Great Physician, ever really heal our wounds? (*sighs, and begins to sew at needlework*)

Enter JOHN DRUMMOND, *door* L., *very quietly.*

DRUM. (*at door*) I barely escaped being seen by them. She's there!—how like, how like! I have found her at last. (*advances to* L. *of table—aloud*) Alice! (*Music ceases—*ALICE *looks up, gives a smothered shriek, rises, stands awe-stricken*) Alice, have you forgotton me?

ALICE. No, no, John Drummond—I have not forgotten you!

DRUM. Nor forgiven me.

ALICE. Long since.

DRUM. I feared I should never discover you.

ALICE. Why seek for me?

DRUM. I wished to see you; I had something to tell you of great importance. (ALICE *bows her head and sits*—DRUMMOND *sitting* L. *of table*) Have you forgotten all that passed years ago?

ALICE. (*coldly*) I have forgotten nothing: I wish I could.

DRUM. I was giving up my search in despair, when by accident this day I saw your father's old servant, Kate. I followed her and tracked her here. From what I heard downstairs I was covinced I had found you at last.

ALICE. (*becoming agitated, rises*) And now—now that you have found me, John Drummond, now that you have discovered my wretched home, leave me, and never let me set eyes upon your face again. The sight of it brings back painful, distracting recollections that torture me. In my most miserable moments I never dreamt of seeing *you* again. A gulf of time, and grief, and bitterness, separates us; do not seek to revive

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the memory of that which seems now like a dark and terrible dream!

DRUM. I have *not* come to torture you in the way you think. I have come to ask you to aid me in a difficult task, but one which *shall* be accomplished as sure as my name is John Drummond.

ALICE. I am at a loss to comprehend you.

DRUM. Your sister Mildred! (ALICE, *with a gasp, sinks into her chair—aside*) I thought so—the word possesses its old power with her. (*aloud*) You have not forgotten her?

ALICE. *Forgotten her?* I think of nothing else, dream of nothing else! Forgotten her!

DRUM. I knew as much. I have sought you, Alice, to aid me in working out a scheme of vengeance against one who should be our enemy.

ALICE. *Our* enemy? I do not understand your drift. But be sure *I* shall connive at no scheme of vengeance against a living soul. My journey is well nigh at an end. I only ask for peace—to be left alone, and by *you* most of all.

DRUM. (*aside*) My task is even more difficult than I anticipated, but I hold a trump card, and if I play it carefully I shall win my game. (*aloud*) Your sister Mildred married—she married Lieutenant Linden, who took her from me. You know she died soon after.

ALICE. (*her head resting on her hand, her eyes on the ground*) Yes.

DRUM. Do you know the circumstances attending her last hours? You may not have heard the wretched details.

ALICE. (*looks up quickly, her hands clasped, and gazes anxiously on* DRUMMOND'S *face*) No, no; I have seen no one who knew.

DRUM. (*aside*) That's well. I shall carry my point. (*aloud*) Alice Petherick, would you refuse to assist me in my revenge on the man who took away your sister and made her his wife, only to consign her to the tender care of mercenary strangers, heartless wretches, who, when he ceased to pay for her support, which he soon did, his fierce and selfish passion having burnt itself out in a few short weeks, left her to *starve*—to *die?* Whilst he was free to enjoy his wealth—to wed another wife.

ALICE. What is this you tell me?

DRUM. (*passionately*) I am telling you how your sister Mildred was treated—the sister you have said you loved.

ALICE (*quickly and excitedly*) *Said* I loved, man—for whom I would have laid down my life!

DRUM. (*quickly*) And whose ill-treatment you would avenge? (*leaning anxiously forward*)

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ALICE. Yes—tell me more. (*Music, piano*)

DRUM. (*leaning back in chair, watching the effect of his words on* ALICE) What did the gay and reckless husband *care* for his young wife? Why, he left her, as I tell you, to die! What would you do, if it was in your power to pay back every heart-ache, every sorrow that *he* caused *her*, with interest? What would you do, if for the cold neglect with which he treated *her*, *you* could deal him misery and disgrace, if you could shame him in the midst of his friends? Would you not do it, Alice Petherick? Shall that neglected, heart-broken, deserted girl, rest unavenged, when *we* have the power to punish—oh, so bitterly and well—the man who took her from her home, and left her to droop and wither amidst strangers, and who came back to rejoice over his release from a galling tie, and to wed another? What would you do, if the means of punishing the heartless and unfeeling villain were placed ready to your hand?

ALICE. (*rising suddenly, places back her chair a step or two up stage*) What would I do? John Drummond—*you* know—you know how precious my darling sister Mildred was to me. You know how strong and enduring was the love that bound our hearts together. You ask me what I would do to this man? I would leave no stone unturned, no plan untried, to pay him back the cruel wrong he did my sister; I would track him step by step, whilst I had life and strength to follow him. You shall tell me your plan; it is a cunning, clever one, if it is yours, I know. I shall not falter. I am no longer the weak and ailing thing I *was*. I am strong *now*, and you may trust me. (*comes forward to* R. *corner of table, extending her left hand to* DRUMMOND, *who grasps it with his right, still sitting*, L.) Hand-in-hand we will hunt him down! Command me—I will be your veriest slave, so that you show me how I can repay *him* Blow for Blow!

(*Picture*—ALICE, *drawn to her full height, holding* DRUMMOND'S *hand, as described, her right arm extended out*—DRUMMOND *seated, and looking triumphantly at her*—*Music, loud, at fall of Act drop*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

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ACT II.

SCENE.—*Handsome Drawing Room; large French windows, C., opening on to lawn, backed by country landscape; the room is richly furnished, crimson furniture; doors* R. *and* L.

Enter HARRY LINDEN (*now* SIR HARRY) *and* DR. GRACE, *through* C. *window;* DR. GRACE *wears large riding boots; Music at rising of curtain.*

LIND. Ha, ha, ha! Doctor, you will have your joke. The change of scene has sent your spirits up, and the fresh air's actually putting a colour into your cheeks.

DR. G. Fresh air and exercise are the physician's best friends, Sir Harry—physic is all very well in its way, but Dame Nature beats Dr. Bolus hollow. Look at Lady Linden, she passes most of her time in the open air, and it's as good as a trip to the sea-side to look at her.

LIND. Yes, she is wonderfully well, bless her! You approve my choice, Doctor, don't you?

DR. G. Approve it, sir—I envy you! I don't care twopence for the baronetcy or the estate—without Lady Linden, they're not worth thinking of; throw her in, however, and you may count on my bidding for the lot. What's the weather going to be like?

LIND. Oh, fairish, I fancy. The meet's at Colonel Hornblower's, but two or three are coming here on their way.

DR. G. Lady Linden goes with us, of course?

LIND. Ye—es, I'm afraid so. To tell you the truth, doctor, I wish you could persuade her to do a little less hunting; she's such a bold rider, and will go in for the most spirited animals, that I'm more than anxious about her throughout every run.

DR. G. Oh, she's safe enough!

LIND. If any accident were to happen to her, I should—but there, I can't bear even to think of such a thing. I'm awfully in love with my wife, Doctor.

DR. G. So am I—I beg your pardon!

LIND. Not a bit of it—I'm proud to hear you say so.

DR. G. The match would have delighted your poor father. He was a great stickler for blood—old families marrying into other old families, and all that sort of thing. Now, she's of as good a stock as you are—the Gortons are a proud lot, too, confoundedly proud!

LIND. And well they may be. Old Earl Gorton has made it his boast that from the time when they came over with the Conqueror, the family have never had one black sheep in it, and no shame or disgrace, even of the slightest kind, has ever tarnished its fair name and fame.

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DR. G. (*aside*) Devilish lucky for the family—I shouldn't like to come of such a reproachless stock; I should be always in no end of fear that I should do something to disgrace my ancestors. As my grandfather was a cobbler, who hung himself in a fit of delirium tremens, I don't feel much qualmishness on *our* account. (*aloud*) Now, you must promise me to enjoy this day. You must not permit this oppression to come over you as it has done frequently since I have been here.

LIND. I'll try, Grace, I'll try. But sometimes, in the midst of my great happiness, a sad thought for poor Mildred, my first wife, will flit across my mind, and for a moment make me serious. You are, I believe, the only living soul who knows my secret. As you are aware, I have never told my wife of my imprudent marriage of six years back; the poor girl died so soon, and the whole affair was so painful that——

DR. G. Yes, yes; I am not an advocate, as a rule, for secrets between husband and wife, but there *are* occasions when—when—well, I haven't told Mrs. Grace everything.

(*Music till* LADY LINDEN *enters*)

LADY L. (*off*, L. C.) Now I will ride "Brown George," so it's no use your talking, Trimmer; I will, I tell you.

LIND. Here she is. Look at her. Neat points, eh? Carries her head well! Good action I fancy, Doctor?

Enter LADY LINDEN, L. C.

LADY L. Look here, Harry; here's Trimmer advising me not to ride "Brown George" again. Why shouldn't I? I can manage him. It's such a mean thing to give in to a horse, isn't it, Dr. Grace?

DR. G. It's a very mean thing of any *horse*, not to—not to——

LADY L. Ha, ha! that's good; now don't you try to pay compliments, Doctor, because you can't do it. Can he, Harry?

LIND. Ha! You should hear what he says about you when you're not present.

LADY L. How can I hear him say it when I am not present; you dear, stupid old retired navy captain, you? (*shakes his hands*)

LIND. (*retaining her hands and looking affectionately at her*) Well; *I'll* try *my* hand at a compliment, Lily. Upon my word—really now—without any flattery. You do—I may say——

DR. G. (*laughing*) I don't see that *you're* so much better at it.

LADY L. No indeed, so I think you'd best not try it any more. You're both sad bunglers? (*crosses*, R.)

LIND. No, no, hang it, Doctor, we won't be *sad* bunglers, we'll be *jolly* bunglers at all events.

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DR. G. Ha, ha! yes. Good sign for a public house—the "Jolly Bunglers," eh! with a portrait of you on one side of the sign and me on the other! Ha, ha! I'll go and look after Trimmer and see if I can persuade him that I'm over ten stone, for he evidently doesn't think so from the horses he gives me to ride. Ha, ha! *Exit* DR. GRACE, *door*, C.

LADY L. It does one good to see how the Doctor enjoys himself.

LIND. The Doctor and my father were old friends—school-fellows, in fact—and my father entertained for him the greatest esteem, which I inherit.

LADY L. I wish you'd consult him, Harry.

LIND. Consult him! What about?

LADY L. About those fits of melancholy you sometimes suffer from. I can tell you they make me very uneasy. Yes, and very unhappy, sir.

LIND. There's nothing Dr. Grace could give me. I have everything I wish for in this world.

LADY L. Oh, I dare say!

LIND. What do you suspect?

LADY L. Oh, there—don't take it seriously, dear, I suspect nothing wrong, you may be sure. But if you'd been *ever* so bad, I'm afraid I should forgive you! (*nestling up to him*) Harry, I say, Harry.

LIND. (*his arm round her*) My love!

LADY L. You—a—you've never loved anybody as well as you love me, have you?

LIND. (*looking into her eyes*) Never!

LADY L. Because I've never cared for anybody. Oh, not even the least bit. When I was about seven I fell in love with John, our page-boy, but it was only his livery. I saw him afterwards, when he'd left and turned butcher, and I hated him.

LIND. Ha! Fickle little seven-year old. Let's talk about horses.

LADY L. By all means.

LIND. What, now, may be your opinion of the horse—as an animal—I say *as* an *animal?*

LADY L. (*looking at him in comical contempt*) And what's your opinion of pumps?

LIND. Subject's too abstruse.

LADY L. By the way, talking of pumps *reminds* one of muffs, don't it?

LIND. Naturally.

LADY L. Well, now don't snap me up. I think that vulgar Cockney man you've taken to is muffish.

LIND. What, Mordaunt?

LADY L. Yes; I don't believe his name is Mordaunt; more

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lively Green, or Tompkins, or something of that sort. You say he is bold rider and a good sportsman. *I* don't think so. I watched him jump the other day, and it's my opinion he's no pluck at all. He simply let's the horse go, and holds on.

LIND. Not a bad plan, I should think.

LADY L. Don't interrupt, sir. But he shuts his eyes before he gets to a rasper—I've seen him. Besides, I saw him tumble off on Tuesday, *distinctly*.

LIND. You're sure it was distinctly?

LADY L. I'll tell you what, you're a contradictory, irritating, impudent, dear old darling—there! (*kisses him*) Oh, I feel so happy to-day, Harry, and what a glorious morning it is—what a *jolly* ride we will have, won't we! I'll let Mr. Brown George see who's master before I've done with him.

LIND. *Do* take care, Lilly; you alarm me sometimes.

LADY L. How can any one "take care" when they're following the hounds? you know they can't. If you want me to ride like an old dowdy, you had better send me to Richmond's Riding School, or the Circus. Oh, that *would* be fun!—the Circus—*you* should be the clown to the ring—ah, ah! "Now, Madame Liliani Lindenetti, what shall I go for to fetch for to carry for to bring *you* to day, ma'am? A streak of greased lightning, with the chill off, or a pennyworth of bottled thunderbolts, or an ounce of rainbow, and a slice off the comet's tail, ma'am? Say the word, and stick to what you *do* say, and I'll lay seventy thousand strawberry-pottles to six pennyworth of silkworms that I bring you whatever you've a fancy for, in the twinkling of a tenpenny-nail. Ha, ha!

Gallops round in imitation of horse in circus, laughing and humming tune—exit, door R.

LIND. (*looking after her affectionately*) My own light-hearted love! By Jove, how I adore that woman! I ought to be the happiest fellow in England—healthy—wealthy—a beautiful wife, and a pretty clear conscience; these are not slices of good fortune that fall to the lot of many men. Hallo, here's the much-abused Mordaunt! I think Lily's right—he does look a bit of a cad. *Goes off, door* R.

Enter DR. GRACE, *with* SPRAGGS *in hunting costume, and carries large riding-whip*, L. C.

DR. G. Well, of course, I give way in a matter of horseflesh to you, Mr. Mordaunt. I've never been able to afford anything beyond a doctor's turn-out.

SPRAG. A doctor's turn-out? Ha, ha! I know 'em—horse big and bony, with a lurching, sleepy action, as if he'd been sitting up with another horse all night—panels dusty—harness rusty—coachman musty. Livery looks as if it had been made

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for somebody else, and hadn't fitted *him*. Hat large, limp and lopsided. Genceral "toot honsombel" *seedy*—that's your style of equipage?

DR. G. (*taking snuff*) Hem! very much so. (*aside*) Vulgar brute. (*aloud*) That's my turn out to a T.

Re-enter LINDEN, *door* R.

SPRAG. Sir 'Arry, I hope I see you! you look uncommonly well—don't require much setting up, eh, doctor? pretty good *biceps*, eh?

DR. G. Biceps, sir! Talk about horses, sir, for I've no doubt you understand 'em; but, damme, sir, don't meddle with anatomy; *Turns up and goes off*, L. C.

SPRAG. (*aside, squaring*) I should uncommonly like to meddle with his anatomy.

LIND. That leap the other day has made your name famous far and wide. (*rises*) It showed great nerve to take it—great nerve—you've been accustomed to a rough country, eh?

SPRAG. Yes; I've had a good many ups and downs in my time. Everything considered, perhaps more of the downs than the hups—*ups*. (*aside*) I wish I could master my h's a little better—sometimes they get too many for me. I tried exercises, and ran over the words, Ornsey, Ighgate, Amstead, Averstock Ill, and Olloway, about a dozen times a day, but I generally come to grief about Amstead. That comes of associating with people like Kitty Wobbler.

LIND. (*going out*) Seen Captain Tarlton or young Flinders?

SPRAG. They're somewhere about there.

LIND. I shall be back directly—tell Lady Linden when she comes. *Exit door*, C.

SPRAG. (*down*) "Tell Lady Linden"—hem! I'm a-going it I am—all amongst the nobs—hand and glove with landed property, and mixing quite free with vested interest. By Jove, though, this is life! Mother always said as I was cut out for the upper crust. I take to it as natural as possible, and I shall finish by marrying some old gal with money. I don't mind 'em old—I shan't even grumble if they're infirm, but they must have a tidy sum. I'm not a-going at my time of life to throw myself away on anything as isn't rich.

(DR. GRACE *meets him*, C. *as he goes up, and* SPRAGGS *turns off short*, R., *whistling and swinging his whip about defiantly*)

DR. G. (*aside*) I'm certain that fellow's a do—he's no sportsman, really, I'm sure. He rides like a tailor to begin with—but then his great raw-boned horse took him over an almost impossible brook, and he becomes the observed of all observers directly. It's the way of the world, modest merit is too often overlooked, whilst the achiever of some gigantic

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fluke hops into a sudden popularity, and backed by unlimited impudence, succeeds in swindling society into the belief that he is a veritable lion. The fools, too, listen to his evident bray, and haven't the courage to call it anything but a roar. (*retires up*) I'll watch the fellow though. It'll amuse *me*, and won't hurt him, to alter the old story of the blacksmith's wife. *Walks up and round to* R., *then off*, C.

SPRAG. (*walks down and round to* L.) I don't like the peculiar look in that Doctor Grace's left eye. The fact is—and it's no use concealing it from *myself*—I'm going about the world under false pretences. (*sits*) I've obtained a sudden celebrity which I shall never be able to keep up. I'm looked upon as a bold rider, what the poet calls a "hardy norseman," but I am not a norseman as is hardy by any means. Because my very long-legged animal Copernicus, and who the devil called him Copernicus I do *not* know, and who Copernicus is when he's at home, I know still *less*; but because Copernicus chooses to risk *his* knees and *my* neck by selecting the very highest parts of the hedges and the very widest parts of the ditches, and clears everything, whilst I am a-triumphantly a-holding on to his mane with one hand and the hind-part of the saddle with the other, whilst my heart is a-bumping twenty-four to the dozen, and I'm a-wondering all the time whether the Insurance Company will pay the thousand pounds in case of a fatal casualty—*why* all this should take place, and me be made a sportive hero of against my inclination, *I do not know*. (*rises*) But I am bound to accept the situation. I find society in the county a-placing me on a pedestal, and it's not for me to come down—but that I *shall* come down, and a pretty considerable cropper *too*, some of these days, I've no doubt at all. The infatuated Kitty Wobbler will no doubt plant a daisy on my tomb, but that is *no* consolation when you don't know as it's being done. (*turns* R., *sees* DR. GRACE)

Re-enter DR. GRACE.

DR. G. (*aside*) I've seen the fellow's face somewhere, too, I'm positive—I'll tackle him. (SPRAGGS *turns round*, L., *and meets* DR. GRACE *face to face—with a gesture detains* SPRAGGS) Mr. Mordaunt!

SPRAG. That is my name, sir.

DR. G. (*looks hard at him*) Precisely! that *is* your name—hem!

SPRAG. (*aside*) Weight's against me, but I think I could polish him off at a pinch.

DR. G. You—ha—have not been in the neighbourhood long, I think?

SPRAG. (*carelessly, and affecting a jaunty air*) No, no—no, no!

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DR. G. Got a house?

SPRAG. Not yet—no—I'm on the look-out—I want very large stables!

DR. G. Yes—yes—of course—you—a—you have a stud!

SPRAG. (*quickly, feeling his shirt front*) Bless you! I've got *three*—don't you think they're rather the thing? Turquoise and diamonds!

DR. G. (*aside*) Hem! he's a swindler. That's a fine animal you ride—but lean, very lean.

SPRAG. I like 'em lean.

DR. G. How do you feed him? How many feeds do you give him a day?

SPRAG. Hem! (*aside*) How many feeds *do* they give a horse a day? *I* don't know—*I* take four meals, a horse wants three times as much as *me*. (*aloud*) Well—a—I tell my fella—hem, my fella—to give him *twelve* meals a day. (*looks askance at* DR. GRACE *to see the effect*)

DR. G. (*laughs, aside*) Ha, ha! (*to him*) Dear, dear! poor thing, only twelve, eh?

SPRAG. (*aside*) It's not enough! (*aloud*) Oh, I don't mean to keep him so low, as a rule—I mean to give him fifteen or sixteen if I work him hard.

DR. G. (*aside*) I was sure he was a thorough humbug!

SPRAG. (*wipes his forehead in great uneasiness*) This is 'orrid.

DR. G. But I fancied—I may be wrong—the other day that there were decided symptoms of *grease* in the heels of your horse, eh?

SPRAG. (*quickly*) I noticed it myself—I said to my fella, I said, there's grease there, I said—but I found out what it was, you know—fact was, when they were clipping him the other day, it was darkish, and my fella was holding the tallow candle and some of it fell on the—a——(*seeing the* DR. GRACE'S *eyes fixed on him, and a half smile on his face,* SPRAGGS *breaks down, evidently alarmed*)

DR. G. Mr. Mordaunt, *you're an impostor!*

SPRAG. Think so? It's fortunate as everybody ain't of the same mind!

DR. G. Poor silly, easily flattered Mrs. McHuggin, for instance.

SPRAG. Exactly, *she* ain't suspicious!

DR. G. Precisely, and she's rich!

SPRAG. E—normous!

DR. G. And you've got an influence over her—possibly may induce the ridiculous old woman to marry you—a respectable woman, of good family.

SPRAG. Why not?

DR. G. Her eyes must be opened—everybody's eyes must be opened!

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SPRAG. Look here! mind as somebody's eyes ain't *closed!*

DR. G. You threaten *me*, you scoundrel? (*about to strike him*—SPRAGGS *shrinks back*)

SPRAG. (*aside*) There—there's *another* sham—I'm always a-talking about muscle and pluck—I'm totally devoid of both—I'm the biggest humbug going, and this penetrating pillgarlic's found it out.

DR. G. Yes, sir, you're an impostor—an adventurer, and it is my duty to expose you!

SPRAG. As to being an adventurer, Doctor GREASE——

DR. G. Not Grease, sir; say Grace, sir, say *Grace.*

SPRAG. (L.) Well, "For what we're about to receive"——

DR. G. Good gracious, sir, I don't mean that!

SPRAG. Anybody's an adventurer who isn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. I'm not imposing on anybody.

DR. G. You are, sir. (*aside*) I'll try a random shot. (*aloud*) What do you mean by calling yourself Mordaunt?

SPRAG. Because it's——

DR. G. (*warningly, with his finger elevated*) Hah!

SPRAG. (*suddenly dropping to a tearful tone*) I've never done *you* any harm; I don't see why you should persecute *me.*

DR. G. Ha, ha, ha! I've no wish to persecute you; I've found you out, that's all. I was sure you were a humbug. That which takes in our simple friend, Sir Harry, doesn't do *me.* He's *Gloucestershire*—I'm Finsbury Square. Now, I'm willing to make a compact with you, Mr. *Mordaunt,* as you call yourself. You may ride and risk your neck (which, by the way, you will in all probability do in whatever line of life you followed)——

SPRAG. Thank you.

DR. G. You may mix amongst those who are fools enough to be friendly with you, and I will breathe not a syllable of the discovery I have made; but you must never say another word to silly old Mrs. Mc Huggin. If you *do,* I'll show you up, and I assure you there are *several* horse-ponds handy.

SPRAG. (*aside, in a weak voice*) And the farm-servants about here have *such* bicepses! (*to him*) You've got me into "chancery;" I admit it; I *am* a do!—I own it—but I'm not a thief, or anything of that kind.

DR. G. Oh, I never said you were.

SPRAG. I came into a lump of money, quite legitimate, and——

DR. G. I don't want to hear any of your private history; you've got the sense to adhere to our compact, I'm sure. For the present *au revoir!* (*going up, off,* L.)

SPRAG. (*waving his hand loftily*) *Oh parde bo coo!* I'm cornered! The doctor ain't a bad sort, though. It's my opinion as he has an eye on Mrs. Mc Huggin himself.

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Enter LINDEN, *door*, R.

LIND. (*down*) Hasn't Lady Linden been here? (*sits*, R.)

SPRAG. (*pulling himself together*) Hem! (*aside*) He don't know anything. (*loftily*) No, Sir A., no!

LIND. By the way, we've got a great sporting man from town here, who's dying to be introduced to you. He's seen that brook, and will hardly believe in the possibility of your having cleared it. He says he must know the daring rider who could take such a leap.

SPRAG. (L.) Ha, ha! We can astound these town-birds, Sir 'Arry.

LIND. Ha, ha!—yes, yes!—we can.

SPRAG. (*pulls out large pocket-handkerchief and dusts his boots, his right leg on ottoman*) I daresay this chap thinks he knows what hunting is; but—ha, ha!—we'll show him a little cross-country work, eh?—ha, ha!

LIND. Yes, we will—we will! Don't go! He'll be in directly.

SPRAG. What's fellar's name?

LIND. Captain Crasher.

SPRAG. My old master! Oh, law! (*sinks on to his spur, and limps off*)

LIND. It's very strange; but I can't throw off this depression to-day! (*Music*) I can't be getting hipped! (*sits by decenport*, R.) I must endeavour to rouse myself. (*looks round*) I have been haunted for hours with the recollection of poor Mildred's face. (*unlocks the drawer—Music piano*) If I were a superstitious man, I should almost fear some calamity was hanging over me to-day. (*brings out miniature*) Poor girl, poor girl!—have I done your memory injustice by concealing the fact of my old boyish attachment to you? I sometimes fancy it was worse than wrong of me to have kept back the fact as I have done; and yet I have nothing to reproach myself with except the rashness which prompted

Enter LADY LINDEN, *door*, R.

me to wed you when I was so soon to leave you to the care of strangers! Had *I* not come across your path you might have been living now! It was a sad business altogether—a sad business!

(LADY LINDEN *seeing her husband gazing abstractedly at something, she walks towards him on tiptoe, with a smothered laugh of amusement at the idea of surprising him*)

LADY L. (*when she has got to the middle of the stage*) What is my silly old boy gazing at so earnestly? he actually doesn't hear me!

LIND. How weak and vacillating was the love I bore *you*, compared with the deep and earnest devotion to my darling Lily! How false is all the rubbish poets write about first love

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—a boy's affection is the dream of an hour, but a *man's* love is a life's reality!

LADY L. What's he saying to himself—I should so like to frighten him, a dear old muff—sitting there, musing like a—

(*goes on tiptoe behind* LINDEN *and looks over his shoulder; as she does so, she sees it is a woman's picture, and gives a smothered half shriek—Music*—LINDEN *rises and turns; simultaneously* JOHN DRUMMOND *comes on at back—stands* C., *seen through the French windows—Music ceases*)

LIND. Lily, what is this?

LADY L. (*recovering herself, but confused*) Nothing. (*sees* DRUMMOND) That man frightened me, that's all. (*crosses to* L.)

LIND. (*advancing towards* JOHN DRUMMOND) What do you mean? how dare you trespass here! there is another door for tramps. (*is about to seize him*)

DRUM. Hold, Sir Henry Linden! don't strike me, sir! you did that once before, and the blows are not forgotten yet.

LADY L. (*aside*) A woman's picture! Oh, Harry! have you deceived me? (*down*, L.)

LIND. I struck you—I never set eye on you, fellow!

DRUM. Don't you remember me?

LIND. No!

DRUM. Don't you remember Josiah Craddock's office at Portsmouth? Josiah Craddock's clerk!

LIND. (*starting violently*) What!

DRUM. Ah! you begin to recollect something of me. You've a remarkably convenient memory, Sir Henry Linden—a great man here in Gloucestershire, but within the recollection of certain parties a lieutenant in Her Majesty's Navy, and the lover of——

LIND. (*alarmed*) Hush! hush, man! (*with great intensity, aside*) Be silent, I say—I will give you anything to be silent! (*Music—looks uneasily at* LADY LINDEN)

DRUM. (*aside*) As I knew—my debt will be paid, and with interest.

LIND. (*going to* LADY LINDEN) Lilly darling, this poor fellow didn't mean to alarm you. I know him—that is, I've met him before. I wish to speak to him in private—leave me for a few moments with him, love. I have no secrets from *you*, my darling, but he would have some delicacy in speaking to me before you.

LADY L. (*taking* LINDEN'S *hand in both of hers, and looking in his face*) Harry, my husband, I need not be alarmed! tell me, dear!

LIND. Alarmed, you silly one—what at?

LADY L. I shall never discover that——

LIND. That *what*, my precious girl?

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LADY L. Oh, I daren't say it—I daren't think it—I trust in you—I believe in you—and you have told me the truth, have you not? (*rests her head on his shoulder*)

LIND. (*aside*) Can my dismal forebodings of three days past have been true? Pshaw! (*to* LADY LINDEN) I shall have to send Doctor Grace to you, Lily; I shall indeed. Have your old faith in me, darling, and say you trust me. (*Music*)

LADY L. (*delighted*) I do, Harry—I do.

LINDEN *kisses her, and she goes off, door* L.—*his manner changes after seeing her off, he turns severely to* DRUMMOND.

DRUM. (*aside*) He loves that innocent girl with his whole soul. This was worth the waiting for—amply worth it!

LIND. And what's your business with me? Are you so forgetful of the thrashing that I gave you some years ago, that you intrude upon me here, and tempt a repetition of that bitter lesson?

DRUM. No, Sir Henry Linden, it wasn't one to forget—and I remember not only what you gave me, but I remember also what you took from me.

LIND. What do you mean?

DRUM. The woman I loved—Mildred! (LINDEN *slightly staggers*)

LIND. (*after a slight pause*) Well, of what avail is your visit here? the whole affair is past and gone. You say I took her from you. I did not know that—she never said one word to make me think she cared for *you*, poor girl. (*Music*)

DRUM. She never did care for me—at least not much. She didn't despise me though—she never insulted me, until *you* came. Josiah Craddock kept no company, his daughter saw very few men more civil-spoken or better-favoured than myself; my devotion would in time have had its influence, had not you come, with your dashing way, and your mocking laugh, and rank, and money in the background to dazzle the country lawyer's daughter, and oust the presuming clerk who had dared to dream impossibilities. A curse on you! I hated you the first time I saw my Mildred's eyes brighten at your approach, and heard her merry laugh at some small jest of her new sailor-lover. I told her of the danger she was in, and you struck me to the ground, and her father said you'd acted rightly, and that I deserved my punishment. Do you remember, Sir Henry Linden, whose turn it was to smile so shortly after? Mine! I transported Mildred's father—my evidence convicted him—and he is a convict at this hour. You are a proud and happy man, the most envied squire in Gloucestershire, but only for a very little while. Wait but a little, and there's not a labourer on your estate with whom you wouldn't gladly change your lot.

LIND. I'll let you have rope enough—I'll hear you out.

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DRUM. (*quietly*) I've waited for years to repay you, and I'll do it now. I can strike shame and sorrow to the heart of her you love!

LIND. (*suddenly*) What?

DRUM. (*quickly*) To Lady Linden!

LIND. To my wife?

DRUM. No! to the woman you have deceived—to the woman you have taken to your heart and home, who is called Lady Linden, but who has no right to that title. *Your wife, Mildred lives!* (*Music till end of Act*)

LIND. (*staggering back*) No, no!

Enter LADY LINDEN, *door*, L.

LADY L. What do these high words mean? (*to* LINDEN) Harry, Harry! speak, you have heard some bad news!

LIND. Leave us, Lily, *leave* us, I say! I wish to be left alone with this person. Go—I—a—I order you!

LADY L. I will *not* go. You are in some trouble—this man is threatening you, Harry, and my proper place is by your side.

DRUM. Not so, madam; not so—your proper place is *not* by his side—your proper place is not in this house. You have no right here!

LIND. (*violently*) Silence, man! (*slight advance*)

LADY L. (*violently and suddenly*) Speak on!

(LINDEN *crosses behind to* R.)

DRUM. (*bows*) I'm bound to obey the lady. Your supposed husband, Sir Henry Linden, married some years back, which trifling fact he seems to have concealed from you. The old couple with whom her husband placed his wife, neglected her most shamefully, and when she fled from them, wandered forth one night in a half delirious state, they were alarmed, and told the husband that his wife had died—he too readily believed the story and the details they had invented between them, and he thought himself a free man when he married *you*, but his wife is living, and you, poor lady, daughter of a noble house that has never known the slightest shame, the faintest shadow of dishonour—you are but *his* mistress!

LIND. (R.) Liar!

(LADY LINDEN *starts indignantly*—LINDEN *makes a rapid movement threateningly towards* DRUMMOND, *who beckons on* ALICE, *door* C., *in French window*—ALICE *dressed so as to appear like* MILDRED *in Prologue, enters suddenly*—LINDEN *staggers back thunderstruck*—*picture*—ALICE *sternly gazing on* LINDEN—LADY LINDEN *has fallen fainting, between them*—*Music louder*—*Act drop slowly*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

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ACT III.

SCENE FIRST.—*Library in Sir Harry Linden's Town House; doors* R. *and* L., L. C.; *table, with chairs, decanters, glasses.*

LINDEN *discovered seated,* DR. GRACE *with him.*

DR. G. I think, my dear friend, that I thoroughly understand what you wish me to do. I needn't say that I shall use my utmost discretion in obeying your injunctions.

LIND. (*taking his hand*) You're a good fellow, Grace, and I don't know what I should have done without you! On that dreadful morning at Meadow Field, Doctor, I think you say, you did not see my—my wife?

DR. G. No; I saw Lady Linden fall in a faint, and went to her assistance. When she was sufficiently conscious to be left, I found your—your—— (*sitting again*)

LIND. My wife (give the poor girl her title, Doctor) had gone! She had not changed very much. A little worn, and with a certain sternness I had never seen upon her face years before; but the same face as ever! (*takes out the miniature from his pocket*) It is strange that she should have left so hurriedly. She has expressed no wish to return?

DR. G. No; having broken up your home and struck an almost fatal blow at a young innocent heart, it looks as if her sole object was accomplished! I don't understand it. It's a mystery. It looks like the very incarnation of revenge and spite, doesn't it?

LIND. And yet, in that sweet and gentle face there lurks no touch of cruelty. Look at it.

DR. G. (*takes it*) Ha! Why, bless my heart, Sir Harry—I—I've seen that face! I know that face!

LIND. Impossible, Doctor! You have never seen her!

DR. G. (*excitedly*) But I have, I tell you! I never forget a face! I've always been remarkable for remembering people! Let me think a moment! I *know* it, I tell you!

LIND. Don't get excited, my dear old friend; you see so many faces, remember!

DR. G. I'm not excited, Sir Harry! I never was cooler in my life! I—I—I know the face! It's the face of a patient of mine—and—by Jove! (*rises—hits his knee*)

LIND. An extraordinary ebullition for my sedate old friend!

DR. G. Hang it, sir, if I was as sedate as the Sphynx and as quiet as—as Stonehenge, I should rouse at this! (*aside*) I remember, now, all sorts of odd things! Mrs. Petherick—if she *was* Mrs. Petherick—said at times about her wrongs—about—about—then she left her lodgings soon after the visit of some strange man, Mrs. Moulsey said—left somewhat

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hurriedly, and would not say a word as to her intentions! That was odd, very odd, just a day or two *before* the sudden reappearance of Sir Harry's—— (*slaps his hand as if suddenly recollecting all about it—becomes absorbed in thought*)

LIND. (*who has been busy with his papers*) Ah, Doctor Grace, my dear old boy, you had better leave off mare's-nest hunting; it's an unprofitable game, and you're too good a sportsman to——

DR. G. (*excited, turning to him*) I'm too good a sportsman, Sir Harry Linden, to give up just at the very moment when I fancy I can see the chance of finding.

SIR H. (*shaking his head incredulously*) My dear sir——

DR. G. I'm not such a fool as I look, sir; I'm a good deal muddled—but in the muddle of the middle—I mean the middle of the muddle—there's a something which—confound it, sir, my suspicions are aroused—I say, sir, my suspicions are *aroused*—(*slaps the table*) and— and——

Enter JOHN, L., DR. GRACE *turning on him, greatly put out.*

What the devil do *you* want, sir? (*Music*)

JOHN. A person is below, of the name of Drummond, who says he must see you, sir. But I told him you were engaged. Besides, as he seemed the worse for drink, I——

DR. G. (*excitedly*) Show him up! show him up *instantly.*

(JOHN *looks a moment for orders from his master, who waves his hand for him to obey* DR. GRACE—JOHN *is about to go, when* DR. GRACE *excitedly stops him, and goes to door, which he shuts*—LINDEN, *at the word* "Drummond," *has appeared agitated and despondent*)

JOHN. Yes, sir, I—— (*goes towards door,* L.—DR. GRACE *warns him threateningly*)

DR. G. Don't you dare to leave the room, sir; don't attempt to move a step, sir. I—I—you say he's drunk, don't you?

JOHN. No, sir, not drunk; only a little excited-like—something like what you are, sir.

DR. G. Humph! (*aside*) Impudent vagabond! (*masters his excitement by a violent effort*) Your rebuke is just, young man—personal, but just—I'll be calmer. Hem! Sir Harry, you can retain your equanimity far better than I can, though you're a rough and ready country squire, and I'm a sober medical practitioner. (*at* JOHN) I say a *sober* medical practitioner, young man. I'll go into the next room whilst you do *all* you can, mind, to pump this Drummond. (*to* JOHN) Show him up.

Exit JOHN, L.

DR. G. (*hurriedly*) You're the victim to some plot; at all

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events, *think* you are; give Drummond some more drink, if he'll take it, and notice everything he says.

(*from this point the scene must be played with great power*)

DRUM. (*heard*) See me, of course he will, knew he would; he *must*.

DR. G. He's here, mind what I've said! (*aside*) This is a most interesting case.

Exit, door R., *hurriedly, as* DRUMMOND *enters*, L.—DRUMMOND *is the least bit wild-looking, not drunk, he is dressed rather flashily.*

DRUM. Good day, sir, good day! They were not for letting me up! Ha, ha!

LIND. (*aside*) I will follow Grace's advice. (*motions* DRUMMOND *to a seat*) I had given orders for no one to be admitted.

DRUM. Well, I'm "no one;" so in I come! What's this? Brandy! that'll do. (*pours it out*) I've been drinking this before to-day; and, of late, when I begin, I can't well stop!

LIND. (*watching him narrowly*) There's a strange change in the fellow's manner. I hoped that, at least, I should not see you again.

DRUM. I haven't come for nothing. Look here, I've been paid so large a slice off my debt, that I might—I don't say I would - but I *might* be induced to forego the remainder, if—if it was made worth my while—(*drinks*)—very well worth my while.

LIND. (*aside, quickly*) What does this mean? (*looks fixedly at* DRUMMOND) Mark me, man, I am in no mood for hints or doubtful suggestions. Speak out! What do you mean?

DRUM. (L.) If I were a rich man, I'd go abroad. Would it be worth your while to make me one?

LIND. You'd go abroad?

DRUM. Yes—but not *alone*.

LIND. Not alone?

DRUM. If I took *her* with me.

LIND. And you dare to make such a proposition?

DRUM. Yes; I dare do anything when I've been drinking.

LIND. (*aside*) The scoundrel!

DRUM. It's not *enough* for you. You'd have scruples were she even at the other end of the world. I *could* do a good deal more than you fancy, if I chose—(*drinks*)—and if I were made rich—(*clutches wildly with his hand and rises*)—rich—looked up to—obeyed—feared—servants afraid of me—ha, ha, ha! (*falls into his seat heavily*) You don't know how to use your wealth—you're soft-hearted—kind to everybody, and fancy you're *beloved*—bah! Were I a wealthy country squire—(*rising*)—I'd grind the common herd beneath my heel.

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(*crosses*) Sir Harry Linden, what if I showed you the certificate of her death—a certificate dated back six years?

LIND. (*rising and striking table in great and sudden excitement*) What do you say?

DRUM. (*after a pause, looks round, passes his hand across his brow, looks at* LINDEN *and perceives in* LINDEN'S *eager, piercing gaze that he has put his foot in it*) I—a—I don't know—I don't know.

LIND. (*aside*) Grace was right; there is some hideous mystery here. (*to* DRUMMOND *who sits*) That was the time I thought my wife had died. The certificate you speak of would be a forgery. What value would that be to me?

DRUM. (*after looking hard at* LINDEN, *who is also gazing fixedly at him*) None—none at all. (*aside*) Curse the drink and my loose tongue—what have I been saying?

LIND. (*aside*) He has said more than he intended. (*to him*) Suppose I chose to entertain this proposition—suppose I give you ample means—made you a rich man—wealthy beyond your wildest dreams. (*excitedly*) And that it could be shown that there was some mystery—some double-dealing in this matter—(DRUMMOND *winces slightly*—LINDEN *sees his advantage and continues*)—of which *detectives* had already got scent, but which they could be put off, could the proof be given that—that—that——

DRUM. (*bluntly*) That what—what? What mare's-nest is this? (*aside*) I've said too much, but I'll say no more.

LIND. (*mechanically pushes the brandy towards him—aside*) If he would only drink a little more!

DRUM. No more drink—keep that for the fools who have secrets, and whose tongues that precious stuff unloosens like a charm. I've been talking nonsense, and didn't mean it; but you, Sir Harry, meant what *you* said, and I'm prepared to hear you say *more* at your very earliest convenience; and I'll tell you this, stranger things have come about than even that which you suppose. (*rises*) Perhaps I can sell you peace of mind; perhaps I can't sell you *anything*. May be I can bring back the glow of happiness and pride to the blanched cheek of the girl you wronged; may be I can do nothing of the kind. (*Music*) That's where a letter will find me. (LINDEN *presses his hand to his heart at these lines, and sinks on chair*) Good day, Sir Harry Linden, good day. (*goes out with unsteady steps,* L.)

Enter DR. GRACE, *stealthily, door* R.

LIND. The Doctor was wrong—it's all bluster and knavish cunning. He can do nothing.

DR. G. (*with force*) The Doctor was *right*, and he can do

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everything. I see something *now* I was an idiot not to see before. Keep up a good heart, my dear boy, and trust in your father's old friend; the scent is keen, the country's clear, and damme, sir, we'll fix the varmint yet!

(LINDEN *and* DOCTOR GRACE *shake hands as Scene closes in*)

SCENE SECOND.—*A Street. Lights half down; "My Pretty Jane" heard on flute off.*

Enter SPRAGGS, R., *playing a flute, he is dressed in a wretched condition (this soliloquy must be spoken with great deliberation).*

SPRAG. Well, if there is a more miserable instrument than the German flute, and if there is a more thorough scoundrel than Jim Grigson, my name ain't Spraggs. And upon my soul I don't know at times if my name is Spraggs, I've had such a lot of aliases that sometimes I forget who I really am. I've soared as high as Montmorency, and I've sunk as low as Splodgers. But in my most hypochondriac-al moments I never did imagine I should come down to the *German flute*. In the first place, it's a thing as I have always despised, a poor melancholy, complaining, I-throws-myself-upon-the-mercy-of-the-court sort of instrument. Now there is some courage about a cornet; if you plays the wrong notes they are bold. And when they are out of tune there's a sort of a blowed-if-I-care air about 'em as is noble. Then again the trombone—I know a party as has been in the 'abit of blowing his sentiments down a trombone for many years, and has brought up a large family quite respectable. '*Arps* too—'*arps* is very pretty playing, and is the only instrument capable of rescuing the flute from *hutter* insignificance. But left to hisself the flute is what I calls *nowheres*. What's more it ain't *heasey*. It takes a deal of wind, and hasn't nothing to show for it. But it was my Kitty's favourite instrument. Many's the time as I've stood under her window in 'appier days, or rather nights, a-serenading her. Twice was I took up, three times was I doused with cold water, four times at least was I called names as curdled my blood, and on one occasion was I brutu-ally assaulted on the nose. But just now forty thousand Babbages wouldn't put a stop to my organ; I'm on the look-out for my Kitty, and my Kitty I will find if she is to be found. She's in service at number six in this street, I know. I'll go on playing till she speaks to me. I will, if I blow myself into a herly grave. "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more." (*plays*) By Jove I see her—I *do* see her, I do, a-coming up a hairey; and he (*plays again with great expression*)

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Enter KITTY, L., *with her bonnet on, and a door-key in her hand; he stands obstrusively in her way, playing.*

KITTY. Here, get out of the way, do!

SPRAG. Kitty, don't you know me?

KITTY. Lawks! (*recovering herself*) No, sir; I *don't* know you, and now as I *do* know you, I knows you still *less*.

SPRAG. Don't look that scornful. Queens of Egypt was in the 'abit of looking as you're a-looking, Kitty.

KITTY. Very likely—didn't know none. *Your* acquaintance with such lofty personages was probably more extensive. Let me pass, I'm a-going for the supper-beer.

SPRAG. What's supper-beer to a blighted 'eart?

KITTY. What? Why, very soothing! Let me go and get the supper-beer. *George* is a-waiting, and he is *that* impatient.

SPRAG. *George!* and who the deuce is *George?*

KITTY. One as knows how to behave himself—one as has no notions above his station.

SPRAG. Which I presume is a *police* station.

KITTY. Oh, dear, no. I haven't come down to taking up with a policeman. George is in an office, (*with wave of hand at each*) where there is clerks—and a—secretaries—and a—messengers—and a—(*after slight pause*) and a umbrella-stand. Ah? You see, sir, in your case pride has had a fall.

SPRAG. A fall? Pride has had a reg'ler cropper. Pride has come down with a run. Pride has been "heavily grassed," pride has received a "oner" on the "domino," and has bitten the dust with his back tooth. Pride has even descended to the German flute for a living, and has come down to struggling ineffectually with "My Pretty Jane" outside of public houses. But pride in the person of Charles Spraggs is but flesh, flesh is grass, and grass is green. The partic'ler grass in question has been greener than the hordinary *run* of grass perhaps, but that's no reason he's to be cut, Kitty. Kitty rhymes with pity; and the poet says, "Pity's aching to love," which is sensibiller than most things them sentimental fellows says as a rule.

KITTY. I always told you your sporting friends would do you no good. What's become of your wonderful friend, Jem Grigson?

SPRAG. (*squaring*) Hah! you may well say—what's become of him. (*with quiet deliberation*) Mr. James Grigson, formerly of Little Titchfield Street, is at present spending a somewhat monotonous time of it in a select establishment at Coldbath Fields, where he's supported at the expense of a parental

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government, who clothes him comfortable, feeds him reg'lar, and sees as his back 'air don't run to ringlets.

KITTY. What did he do?

SPRAG. *What* did he do! *Who* did he do, you mean, or who *didn't* he do? Look at the way he treated me, an old friend—waited his opportunity, and then took my little all.

KITTY. I knew you'd never keep your money.

SPRAG. I'd put by a trifle for a rainy day, but it's always rainy days now, Kitty. If you and me could only creep under the humbrella of mutual affection. Don't be cruel to a cove down on his luck, Kitty. Since you and me was sweethearts, I have mixed in reg'lar high life. I have sat at the banquet table of the British swell, and I have trod the gilded sal-oon. The conclusion I have arrived at from personal observation, Kitty, is, that both is 'umbugs. Give me for a friend him as knows you always, not him as is quite affable in the huntin'-field, and looks over your 'ead when he meets you in Piccadilly. When I had money, Kitty, I was a "jolly dog—a little eccentric, perhaps, but that's his way." When I'd lost my money I was "a low cur, as kicking was too good for." Oh, I've learnt a lesson, Kitty, and if you say as you're a-going to turn your back on me too, the lesson 'll be complete, I can assure you.

KITTY. (*melting*) But I don't say as I *am* going.

SPRAG. (*delighted*) Don't you, Kitty? Do you mean to give me another chance? If I come into the Bank of England, I won't behave as I *did*, Kitty. (*delighted, but suddenly depressed*) But I'm a-keeping you away from George.

KITTY. Suppose there *wasn't* a George, Charley?

SPRAG. (*romantically*) She calls me by my Christian name, and bliss once more is mine!

KITTY. I knew you'd come back again, and be precious humble again *some* day. If you couldn't keep faith with *me*, I could with *you*, and I haven't got no sweetheart, Charley.

SPRAG. No?

KITTY. Not that I mightn't have had loads; there was young Perkins, as——

SPRAG. Don't—don't harrow me up! I remember young Perkins—a fellow with no more biceps than a blue-bottle! You might let me give you one kiss, Kitty; it'll remind me of old times. Nothing in that line's passed my lips since I saw you last. Just one!

KITTY. Not in the street, stupid! 'A done, now! (*he kisses her*) Ha!

SPRAG. Ha, that's better than the German flute!

KITTY. I wonder at you, there's [illegible] (*Music*

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SPRAG. What—why, Kitty—Kitty, I say—look—he's moved on a bit—seems like on the look-out for some street! Don't you see who it is?

KITTY. Oh, Charley, fancy after all this time——

SPRAG. We must go and speak to him; it's only right, Kitty. Come, dear!

KITTY. Yes, Charley—yes. (*stops*) But, tell me, what have you been a-livin' on all this time?

SPRAG. Living on? Living on my wits.

KITTY. (*sighs*) Hah! I thought from your looks as you'd had very poor nourishment!

Exeunt, R.

(*change of scene—Music, loud*)

SCENE THIRD.—*Alice's Lodgings, St. James's Park. Windows down to floor, open on to leads up* L., *set diagonally; doors,* R. *and* L.; *window,* L. C., *showing trees and clock-tower, House of Lords.*

ALICE *at window, and* LADY LINDEN, *down* R. C., *discovered.*

ALICE. I am sorry for you—very sorry for you—but I am powerless.

LADY L. He loved you! He never ceased to regard your memory. I *know* this.

ALICE. (*dreamily*) No, no!

LADY L. He did conceal the fact of his former marriage from me—perhaps that was weak of him; but he knew that I was a silly jealous girl, and that it might wound my pride, were I to know that he had offered me his love second-hand.

ALICE. You deceive yourself! (*crosses,* R.)

LADY L. (*rises*) *You* deceive *yourself*—(*goes behind* ALICE *to* L.) or are deceived by some one else! (ALICE *slightly starts, and watches* LADY LINDEN'S *face as she continues*) I cannot believe that you would act thus, were there not some hidden hand directing you. You are a woman—a woman with a tender, gentle heart—for all your cruel conduct, I am sure! You have suffered long and terribly, I know; but there is more than meets the eye in the motive urging you to wait so long before you struck this dreadful blow! You are not following the dictates of your own heart alone! (*Music—* ALICE *has turned slightly away, as if she could not deny the accusation—*LADY LINDEN *continues, passionately, seizing* ALICE'S *hands*) Tell me—tell me the secret mystery that prompts so relentless a course! Have pity on me, I love Harry so dearly! Though it may be a sin to love him now! (*overcome*)

ALICE. (*aside, her voice a little broken, and a pained look on*

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her face—with quiet intensity) Poor girl, poor girl! But even as I feel my heart softening at her grief, I see the tender, mournful, loving eyes of my lost Mildred, and it is hard and cold and pitiless once more. (*her countenance changes through this, and it is now cold and rigid*)

LADY L. (*slowly looking up, starts back*) I see, unfeeling, heartless woman, that I appeal in vain, and you will leave him—leave him with this great sorrow all alone?

ALICE. (*in a low voice*) Yes!

LADY L. He has never ceased to blame himself; admits his own rash want of care, and though he had concealed his marriage with you from me, he had confessed this secret to an old friend, a physician, who has since declared that he revered his first wife's memory, and that he had many hours of hidden grief that I had never known of. (*in a louder tone looking hard at* ALICE)

ALICE. (*turning to* LADY LINDEN) Is this true? I need not ask—that face *cannot* lie! Tell me more!

LADY L. Why only a few moments before you came to Meadowsfield, I crept up softly behind his chair, seeing he was watching something earnestly, and discovered it was your portrait. (ALICE *places her hand to her side, and seems greatly touched by this*)

ALICE. (*afflicted, aside*) Mildred's portrait! Can I have been deceived! This girl is speaking truth.

LADY L. When the whole sad story came out, it seemed that Harry, some years ago, had severely beaten the man who was with you, beaten him terribly for speaking insolently of him to *you*.

ALICE. (*aside*) A light breaks in upon me. Have I been the dupe of—— a horrible suspicion is arising in my mind! (*seizes* LADY LINDEN *by the hand, with intensity*) Do not make sure that this accusation will be supported—do not condemn me so hurriedly as you think you are justified in doing—I——

LADY L. (*wildly, clutching her hand*) I see signs of relenting in your face, hear a sound of hope in the softened tone of your voice.

DRUM. (*heard*) Will they never learn who I am? (*at the sound of his voice* ALICE'S *face assumes a stern expression*)

ALICE. Go in there, quick!—ask me nothing further yet—go—you mustn't meet John Drummond *now*. (*almost pushes* LADY LINDEN *into room* R., *then closes door, and stands by it*) If I have been but the instrument for this man's vengeance, I have sunk low indeed!

Enter DRUMMOND, *excited, door* L.

DRUM. Good news, glorious news, Alice!—h( ) *Mildred*

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I mean, but the old name will pop out. Ha, ha! riches, girl, wealth, freedom, ha, ha! (*he is smoking a cigar, goes to window*)

ALICE. (*aside, with deep feeling*) And he has *deceived* me, *cheated* me, played on the deep love that I bore Mildred, to gain his own bad ends alone. I thought to avenge my darling sister's wrongs, I thought to punish with a public shame one who had been cruel to *her*, and I have nearly crushed the life of this poor girl, simply to serve, it seems, this villain's purpose!

DRUM. I've seen the baronet; I very nearly put my foot in it, too. What's the matter? Don't you hear that there's money for us? heaps of money only waiting to——(*seeing her cold expression*) Alice!

ALICE. I want none of your money—will touch *none* of it.

DRUM. Holloa! what's this mean?

ALICE. It means that I have heard the truth; it means that I shall have no more to do with you or your scheme; it means that—I can hardly trust myself to speak! (*crosses, L.*)

DRUM. What fool's talk's this? Have you become melancholy mad at the very moment of triumph?

ALICE. Triumph! Do you think I shall ever know another peaceful hour, when I think of the great wrong I have committed? Why, even when the truth is known, when I have *confessed* the whole plot to have been a shameful conspiracy, and when with one word I restore this lady's good name, and give back joy to her husband's heart, think you *I* shall look back upon this business with no deep sense of shame and sorrow—that there is no suffering in store for *me*.

DRUM. (*who has looked black and lowering at the word "confessed" throws his cigar away, and comes a step or two forward*) When you have confessed, d'ye say?

ALICE. Yes. I shall lay the whole truth before Sir Harry Linden, and implore his forgiveness—implore his wife's forgiveness, though I can never hope to obtain it!

DRUM. Oh!—so you would expose me—turn on me—at the very moment when, having brought the business to a head, the dream and hope of my life is to be accomplished! You would stand between me and the money, almost within my clutch! (*this is all given in a lowish tone of great ferocity—a malignant look on* DRUMMOND'S *face*) And you think I will consent to be baulked of that, as well as my debt, Alice Petherick; you think I will submit to this sudden qualm of conscience, or dread of discovery, or whatever it may be, and *let* you do what you threaten?

ALICE. Leave the house, John Drummond—this room is mine. Our compact is at an end. This very night your vil-

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lany shall be exposed, and— (DRUMMOND *makes a movement as if he would strike at her—she, alarmed, moves back a little*) Spare your violence and rage for those who fear you! You are powerless to turn me from my purpose now.

DRUM. Treacherous vixen, you shall find that I am *not* powerless! (*makes a rush at her fiercely from* R.—*she with a smothered shriek, passes hurriedly aside to avoid him*)

Enter DR. GRACE, *promptly, door,* L.—*picture—pause.*

DR. G. What are you about, you scoundrel? (*crosses to* C.) Mrs. Petherick, I'll swear it. (*takes snuff*)

Enter LINDEN, L. 1 E., *as* LADY LINDEN *re-enters,* R.

LIND. Lily, what are you doing here?

LADY L. (*aside*) Harry!

DR. G. Now, sir, what's this mystery mean?

DRUM. (*blusteringly*) What mystery?

ALICE. Dr. Grace!

DR. G. (*slapping his thigh*) Knew it!

ALICE. Your coming here has but hastened the confession of the wrong I've done this lady, which I was about to make this night.

DRUM. (*fiercely turning*) Take care, woman!

DR. G. (*turning on him*) Hold your tongue!

ALICE. I am Mildred Craddock's twin sister!

LIND. (L.) What!

ALICE. Driven well-nigh to the verge of madness by the artful story of her supposed wrongs, invented for his own vile ends by John Drummond there, I consented, when beneath the spell of his bad influence, to simulate my loved, lost Mildred; and only learnt to-night, from that poor lady, how lying were the lips that forged a tale so shameful and so base! Oh! forgive me, lady! *you* cannot feel the anger that I feel against myself.

LIND. (*crossing to* R., *arms round* LADY LINDEN) My love! My wife!

DRUM. D'ye believe that hysterical, half-mad woman? I deny her absurd assertion. Who can prove it?

Enter CRADDOCK, *promptly,* L. 1 E.

CRAD. (L.) *I* can!

ALICE. (*after slight pause*) Father!

DRUM. (*aside*) Josiah Craddock!

DR. G. Hem! what's the state of the pulse now?

CRAD. You won't reject *my* evidence, fellow, *I think.* (*crossing to* C.) Alice, my child, can you forgive my long years of resentment? I come to ask *your* pardon *now*.

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ALICE. (*head upon his breast*) Father!

CRAD. (*turns L. to him*) If you cannot be punished as I have been, John Drummond, you can now experience what will be as hard for such a one as you to bear—the bitterness of having failed in your revenge!

DRUM. Curse on——

DR. G. (*quietly putting him down*) Hush—sh—sh.—

(DRUMMOND *staggers back, and sinks in chair* L.—DR. GRACE *over him*)

LIND. My darling Lily!

LADY L. Oh, Harry! I—I—I—may love you now, mayn't I?

LIND. We'll go back to Gloucestershire, and be as happy as the days are long.

CRAD. (L. C.) We'll go far away from here, my love, and my life shall be devoted to one object alone—striving, by a loving care for you, to wipe away the recollection of the wrong I did you.

ALICE. (R. C.) We all have much to forgive; but in looking with humble, yet hopeful eyes towards the future, don't let us forget the past; and let us learn a lesson from it, father, dear; a lesson of love and charity; one that shall teach us the great truth, that it's better for us to return good for evil, and not BLOW FOR BLOW!

LINDEN (*over her*).

LADY LINDEN (*in easy chair*). DRUMMOND (*on chair*).

ALICE. CRADDOCK. DR. GRACE.

Curtain.

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MUSIC OF BURLESQUES, OPERAS, AND DRAMAS TO LOAN.

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Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0
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Bombastes, p.v.	7	6
Ditto, 8 band parts	7	6
Bride of Abydos, drama, 6 b. pts.	5	0
Bride Lammermoor, dr., 5 bnd. pts.	7	6
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Brown and the Brahmins, burl. p.v.	15	0
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Bottle Imp, dra., 1 & 2 violin, basso	3	0
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Cinderella [Byron] burl. p.v.	20	0
Cinderella [Miss Keating] burl. p.v.	5	0
Colleen Bawn, drama, 8 band parts	10	0
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Dumb Girl of Genoa, 5 band parts	5	0
Eddystone Elf, drama, 6 band pts.	5	0
Ella Rosenberg, 5 band parts	5	0
Ernani, burl., 9 band parts	10	0
Esmeralda, burl. p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 10 band parts	15	0
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Evil Eye, 6 band parts	5	0
Exile, 4 band parts	5	0
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Fairyland, fairy play, p.v.	7	6
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Father and Son, drama, 5 band pts.	5	0
Field of Cloth of Gold, burl. p.v.	20	0
Field of Forty Footsteps, 7 b. pts.	7	6
Flying Dutchman, 7 band parts	15	0
Fortunio, extrav., 10 band parts	15	0
Forty Thieves, drama [Sheridan] p.v.	5	0
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Ditto, 7 band parts	5	0
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Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Frankenstein, burl. 6 band parts	5	0
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Green Bushes, 8 band parts	10	0
Guy Mannering, drama, p.v.	10	0
Ditto, 6 band parts	7	6
Gwynneth Vaughan, p.v., 6 b. pts.	5	0
Happy Man, p.v.	3	6
Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Hamlet, grave-digger's song & acc.	1	0
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Ixion, p.v.	20	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0

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Lady Godiva, vocal, and 13 band pts.	20	0
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Lady of Lyons [Byron] burl. p.v.	15	0
Ditto, 5 band parts	10	0
La Somnambula [Byron] burl.	15	0
Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0
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Lost and Found, p.v.	5	0
Lost in London, 8 band parts	10	0
Love by Lantern Light, p.v.	10	0
Love in a Village, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 7 band parts	7	6
Love Laughs at Locksmiths, p.v.	3	0
Lucille, 6 band parts	5	0
Luke Somerton, 10 band parts	7	6
Luke the Labourer, 6 band parts	5	0
Macbeth, tragedy, v. score & 8 b. pts.	10	0
Macbeth Travestie, p.v.	7	6
Ditto, 4 band parts	5	0
Madame Angot, p.v.	5	0
Maid and Magpie, drama, p. score	3	6
Maid and Magpie [Byron] burl. p.v.	20	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Maid of the Mill, opera, p.v.	2	6
Maid with Milking Pail (song)	1	0
Mariner's Compass, drama, 15 b.p.	15	0
Mary Turner, p.v.	10	0
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Masaniello, burl. p.v.	20	0
Masaniello, drama, 4 band parts	3	6
Mazeppa, 10 band parts	10	0
Medea, burl. full vocal score	10	0
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Medea, burl. p.v.	10	0
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Ditto, 9 band parts	10	0
Miller and Men, drama, 5 band pts.	7	6
Minerali, 3 band parts	2	6
Mischief-Making, vocal & 13 b. pts.	10	0
Monsieur Jacques, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 8 band parts	7	6
Mother Goose, harl., orig., p.v.	5	0
Motto, burl. p.v.	10	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Mountaineers, p.v.	3	6
Ditto, 8 band parts	7	6
Much Ado About Nothing, 8 b. p.	7	6
My Poll and my Partner Joe, bur. p.v.	15	0
Nobody's Child, 9 band parts	10	0
No Song, No Supper, opera, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 4 band parts	5	0
Nurseryrhymia, fairy play, p.v.	5	0
Nursery Pastoral, p.v.	7	6
Oak Chest, 10 band parts	10	0
Octoroon, 10 band parts	10	0

	s.	d.
Of Age To-morrow, opera	3	6
Of Noble Birth, p.v.	7	6
Orpheus and Eurydice [Brough] p.v.	2	6
Padlock, The, opera, p.v.	3	6
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Perdita, burl. p.v.	20	0
Pills of Wisdom, p.v.	10	0
Pirates, opera, p.v.	5	0
Pizarro, p.v.	3	0
Ditto, 4 band parts	2	0
Prince Nicey Nosey, p.v.	7	6
Princess Charming, p.v.	20	0
Prize, The, opera, p.v.	2	6
Puss in Boots [Planché] full score	7	6
Puss in Boots [Miss Keating] p.v.	5	0
Quaker, p.v.	5	0
Raymond and Agnes, 3 band parts	3	0
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Robert Macaire, 4 band parts	2	0
Rob Roy, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	5	0
Robin Hood, burl. p.v.	15	0
Ditto, 8 band parts	15	0
Robinson Crusoe, p.v. (evening ent.)	5	0
Robinson Crusoe [Byron] p.v.	7	6
Rosina, opera, p.v.	3	6
Sardanapalus, tragedy, entire music	7	6
School Bor-ed, p.v.	10	0
Sentinel, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 14 band parts	15	0
Shaughraun, 8 band parts	10	0
Shepherd of Cournouilles, p.v.	3	0
Siege of Rochelle, p.v.	10	0
Sleeping Beauty [Miss Keating] p.v.	5	0
Sister's Sacrifice, 11 band parts	15	0
Sweethearts and Wives, p.v.	5	0
Swiss Swains, v.sc. opening chorus	5	0
Swiss Cottage, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Ten Tortured Tutors, p.v.	7	6
Tell with a Vengeance, p.v.	7	6
Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Therese, 5 band parts	5	0
Ticket of Leave Man, 8 band pts.	10	0
Tower of Nesle, 9 band parts	7	6
Trombalcazar, p.v.	7	6
Trooper's Horn, full score	7	6
Turnpike Gate, opera, p.v.	3	6
Two Blinds, p.v.	5	0
Vampire, 4 band parts	5	6
Villikins and Dinah, p.v.	7	6
Watch and Wait, drama, 8 bnd. pts.	7	6
Waterman, p.v.	2	6
Ditto, 11 band parts	7	6
Welsh Girl, overture, full score	2	6
White Horse of Peppers, p.v.	2	6
Ditto, 6 band parts	2	6
White Cat [Keating] p.v.	3	0
White Cat [Planché] full score	5	0
Whittington and Cat, 7 band parts	5	0
Whittington, Junior, and his Cat.	15	0
Who's the Heir, operetta, p.v.	4	0
Who Stole the Clock, op. bouffe, p.v.	7	6
Wild Boy of Bohemia, 5 band parts	5	0
William Tell [Brough] p.v.	2	6
Willow Pattern Plate, 9 band parts	7	6
Widows Bewitched, operotta, p.v.	10	0
Windsor Castle [Burnand] op. bur. p.v.	2	6
Yellow Dwarf [Miss Keating] p.v.	3	6
Yew-tree Ruins, 6 band parts	7	6

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	s.	d.
Jack and the Beanstalk, p.v.	7	6
Jack Robinson & his Monkey, 6 b p.	5	0
Jack Sheppard (songs in)	1	0
Jeanette's Wedding Day, p.v.	15	0
Joan of Arc, burl. p.v.	15	0
Joan of Arc, drama, 4 band parts	5	0
John of Paris	10	0
Kenilworth, burl. p.v.	20	0
King Alfred and the Cakes, bur. p.v.	3	0
Lady Godiva, vocal, and 13 band pts.	20	0
Lady of the Lake, score, 5 band pts.	7	6
Lady of Lyons [Byron] burl. p.v.	15	0
Ditto, 5 band parts	10	0
La Somnambula [Byron] burl.	15	0
Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0
Little Red Riding Hood, p.v.	7	6
Loan of a Lover, p.v.	5	0
Lodoiska, opera, p.v.	2	6
Lord Lovel, p.v.	7	6
Lost and Found, p.v.	5	0
Lost in London, 8 band parts	10	0
Love by Lantern Light, p.v.	10	0
Love in a Village, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 7 band parts	7	6
Love Laughs at Locksmiths, p.v.	3	6
Lucille, 6 band parts	5	0
Luke Somerton, 10 band parts	7	6
Luke the Labourer, 6 band parts	5	0
Macbeth, tragedy, v. score & 8 b. pts.	10	0
Macbeth Travestie, p.v.	7	6
Ditto, 4 band parts	5	0
Madame Angot, p.v.	5	0
Maid and Magpie, drama, p. score	3	6
Maid and Magpie [Byron] burl. p.v.	20	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Maid of the Mill, opera, p.v.	2	6
Maid with Milking Pail (song)	1	0
Mariner's Compass, drama, 15 b.p.	15	0
Mary Turner, p.v.	10	0
Ditto, 12 band parts	15	0
Masaniello, burl. p.v.	20	0
Masaniello, drama, 4 band parts	3	6
Mazeppa, 10 band parts	10	0
Medea, burl. full vocal score	10	0
Ditto, 8 band parts	10	0
Medea, burl. p.v.	10	0
Merchant of Venice (unpub. songs of)	2	0
Midas, p.v.	5	0
Mids. Night's Dream [Bishop] p.v.	7	6
Military Billy Taylor, p.v.	15	0
Miller and Men, burl. p.v.	10	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	10	0
Miller and Men, drama, 5 band pts.	7	6
Minerali, 3 band parts	2	6
Mischief-Making, vocal & 13 b. pts.	10	0
Monsieur Jacques, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 8 band parts	7	6
Mother Goose, harl., orig., p.v.	5	0
Motto, burl. p.v.	10	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Mountaineers, p.v.	3	6
Ditto, 8 band parts	7	6
Much Ado About Nothing, 8 b. p.	7	6
My Poll and my Partner Joe, bur. p.v.	15	0
Nobody's Child, 9 band parts	10	0
No Song, No Supper, opera, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 4 band parts	5	0
Nurseryrhymia, fairy play, p.v.	5	0
Nursery Pastoral, p.v.	7	6
Oak Chest, 10 band parts	10	0
Octoroon, 10 band parts	10	0
Of Age To-morrow, opera	3	6
Of Noble Birth, p.v.	7	6
Orpheus and Eurydice [Brough] p.v.	2	6
Padlock, The, opera, p.v.	3	6
Pas de Fascination, 8 band parts	5	0
Patient Penelope, p.v.	10	0
Perdita, burl. p.v.	20	0
Pills of Wisdom, p.v.	10	0
Pirates, opera, p.v.	5	0
Pizarro, p.v.	3	0
Ditto, 4 band parts	2	0
Prince Nicey Nosey, p.v.	7	6
Princess Charming, p.v.	20	0
Prize, The, opera, p.v.	2	6
Puss in Boots [Planché] full score	7	6
Puss in Boots [Miss Keating] p.v.	5	0
Quaker, p.v.	5	0
Raymond and Agnes, 3 band parts	3	0
Review, p.v.	5	0
Robert Macaire, 4 band parts	2	6
Rob Roy, p.v.	5	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	5	0
Robin Hood, burl. p.v.	15	0
Ditto, 8 band parts	15	0
Robinson Crusoe, p.v. (evening ent.)	5	0
Robinson Crusoe [Byron] p.v.	7	6
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Sister's Sacrifice, 11 band parts	15	0
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Swiss Swains, v.sc. opening chorus	5	0
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Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
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Tell with a Vengeance, p.v.	7	6
Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Therese, 5 band parts	5	0
Ticket of Leave Man, 8 band pts.	10	0
Tower of Nesle, 9 band parts	7	6
Trombalcazar, p.v.	7	6
Trooper's Horn, full score	7	6
Turnpike Gate, opera, p.v.	3	6
Two Blinds, p.v.	5	0
Vampire, 4 band parts	5	6
Villikins and Dinah, p.v.	7	6
Watch and Wait, drama, 8 bnd. pts.	7	6
Waterman, p.v.	2	6
Ditto, 11 band parts	7	6
Welsh Girl, overture, full score	2	6
White Horse of Peppers, p.v.	2	6
Ditto, 6 band parts	2	6
White Cat [Keating] p.v.	3	0
White Cat [Planché] full score	5	0
Whittington and Cat, 7 band parts	5	0
Whittington, Junior, and his Cat	15	0
Who's the Heir, operetta, p.v.	4	0
Who Stole the Clock, op. bouffe, p.v.	7	6
Wild Boy of Bohemia, 5 band parts	5	0
William Tell [Brough] p.v.	2	6
Willow Pattern Plate, 9 band parts	7	6
Widows Bewitched, operetta, p.v.	10	0
Windsor Cstl. [Burnand] op. bur. p.v.	2	6
Yellow Dwarf [Miss Keating] p.v.	3	6
Yew-tree Ruins, 6 band parts	7	6

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ancient, honoured race. The other young man is the son of a butterman.

CLAR. A *retired* one, remember.

SIR G. Impossible! A butterman *can't* retire.
You may break, you may shatter the *tub* if you will,
But the scent of the butter will hang by it still.

Mr. Middlewick is a most estimable person,—charitable—as he *ought* to be; and has considerable influence in the neighbourhood.

CLAR. Which accounts for your tolerating him.

SIR G. I admit it. The dream of my life has been that my boy Talbot should distinguish himself in Parliament. To that end I mapped out a complete course of instruction for him to pursue; directed him to follow the plan laid down implicitly; never to veer to the right or left, but to do as I bid him, like—like——

CLAR. Like a machine.

SIR G. Eh? Yes, like a machine. Machines never strike.

CLAR. I hope he'll answer your expectations. Considering his advantages, his occasional letters haven't been *remarkable*, have they? (*aside*) Except for brevity—which, in *his* case, has *not* been the soul of wit.

SIR G. Dear! dear! Clarissa, what a woman you are! What would you have of the boy? His letters have been a little short, but invariably *pithy*. I don't want my son to be a literary man. I want him to shine in politics and——

CLAR. Suppose Mr. Middlewick's views regarding his son are similar. Supposing he wants *him* to shine in politics.

SIR G. Clarissa, you seem to take a great interest in Mr. Middlewick. A man without an H to his back. A man who—who eats with his knife, who behaves himself in society like an amiable gold-digger, and who——

CLAR. Who is coming up the path. So moderate your voice, Geoffry, or he'll hear you.

SIR G. You're a very irritating woman, Clarissa, and I don't—don't——

MR. PERKYN MIDDLEWICK *appears at French windows. He is a sleek, comfortable man of about fifty.*

MID. Hah! Sir Geoffry, glad to see you. Miss Champneys, your 'umble servant. (*shakes hands;* SIR GEOFFRY *shakes hands distantly,* MISS CLARISSA *warmly*) Phew! ain't it 'ot? awful 'ot.

SIR G. (*loftily,* R.) It *is* very *warm*.

MID. (C.) Warm! *I* call it 'ot. (*to* CLARISSA) What do *you* call it?

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CLAR. *I* call it decidedly "*hot.*"

MID. That's what *I* say. *I* say it's 'ot. Well, Sir Geoffry, any *noos?*

SIR G. *No* NEWS.

MID. No noos! Ain't you heard from your son?

SIR G. Not a line.

MID. Oh, *my* boy's written me a letter of about eight pages. He'll be here soon; I sent the shay.

SIR G. Sent the *what?*

MID. The *shay*—the *shay.*

SIR. G. Oh, the *chaise?*

MID. No, only *one* of 'em. They'll be here directly. What's the good of Charley writing me a letter with half of it in foreign languages? Here's a bit of French here, and a morsel of 'Talian *there*, and a slice of *Latin*, I suppose it is, further on, and then a something out of one of the poets—leastways, I *suppose* it is, for it's awful rubbish—then, lor! regler rigmarole altogether. S'pose he done it to shew as the money wasn't wasted on his eddication.

SIR. G. (*with satisfaction*) Hah! rather different from *my* son. *He* prefers to reserve the fruits of *his* years of study until he can present them in person. *Your* son, Mr. Middlewick, has followed the example of the strawberry sellers and dazzled you with the display of the top. Perhaps when you search *below* you may find the contents of the pottle *not* so satisfactory. (*goes up*)

MID. (*down, c., aside*) Mayhap I may. Mayhap the front tubs is butter and the rest *dummies.* When I first started in business I'd the finest stock in Lambeth—to *look* at. But they was *all* sham. The tubs was 'oller if you turned 'em round, and the very *yams* was 'eartless delooders. Can Charley's letter be?—*No*, I won't believe it.

CLAR. (*aside to him*) Don't, dear Mr. Middlewick, don't.

(*goes up in pleasing confusion*)

MID. (*aside*) That's a very nice, sensible woman. It ain't the *first* time she's been civil to *me.* I'll play the polite to her if it's only to rile old poker-back. (*goes up to her,* L.)

SIR. G. (*down,* R.) I knew "our boys" would drive here first, Mr. Middlewick, which must be my excuse for this intrusion, and—— (*noise of a carriage driving up heard*) Here they are! here they are!

MID. (*goes up to window*) That's them! that's them!

SIR. G. (R.) I feel actually faint, Clarissa. (*sinks on sofa*) The thought of seeing my dear, handsome, clever boy again is—is——

CLAR. (*aside*) Don't exhibit this ridiculous weakness, Geoffry.

SIR. G. Before a tradesman, too. You are right. (*rises*)

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MID. I feel a bit of a—sort of a—kind of a fluttering *myself.*

Enter CHARLES MIDDLEWICK, *at* L. D.

CHAR. Father! Dad! Dear old governor! (*rushes to his father's arms*)

MID. My boy! My boy! (*embraces him; they are demonstrative in their delight.* CHARLEY *is a handsome, gallant young fellow*)

SIR G. Yes, but where's *my* son? Where's Talbot?

Enter TALBOT CHAMPNEYS. *He is a washed-out youth, with yellow-reddish hair parted down the middle: a faint effort at a fluffy whisker and moustache; dreadfully over-dressed, and has a limp look generally; an eye-glass, and a soft namby-pamby manner.*

SIR. G. Talbot, my dear boy, I'm so delighted to——

TAL. Yes, yes; how are you? Bless my life, how grey you've got—shouldn't have known you. And—that's not Aunt Clarissa? Dear, dear! such an alteration in three years—shouldn't have known you. (*kisses her; they turn aside conversing*)

MID. (L.) Well, Charley, old boy, how do I look, eh? Pretty 'arty, for an old 'un.

CHAR. Yes, yes, splendid. (*to him, aside*) *H*earty, dad, *h*earty.

MID. Well, I *said* 'arty. And you, Charley—there! Growed out of all knowledge.

CHAR. (*aside*) Growed—hem! (*seems annoyed at his father's ignorance. Aside to him*) "Grown," governor, "grown."

MID. Ain't got nothing to groan *for.* (*aside*) Rum notions they pick up abroad. But, Charley, you ain't introduced me to your friend, Mr. Talbot. Do the *h*onours, do the *h*onours.

CHAR. Talbot, this is my father.

MID. Proud to know you, sir.

TAL. (*through his glass*) How do? how do?

MID. 'Arty as a buck, and fresh as a four-year-old, thankee. Hope we shall see a good deal of you, Mr. Talbot—any friend of my son's——

SIR G. (*comes down,* R.) Yes, exactly, Mr. Middlewick. Flattered, I'm sure, but our boys' lines of life will be widely apart, I expect. Your son, I presume, will embark in commerce, whilst mine will, I trust, *shine* in a public and, excuse me for adding, a more *elevated* sphere.

MID. (*aside,* L. C.) Yes, he looks like a *shiner.*

CLAR. But, Geoffry, probably Mr. Middlewick and his son would like to be alone a little, so——

MID. Just so. (*aside*) She *is* a sensible woman. (*to them*) I shouldn't mind if you *did* get out for a short time.

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SIR G. Exactly. I want a talk with Talbot too, and as the ponies are put up, Talbot, we'll have a stroll through the grounds.

TAL. I don't mind. Only I'm jolly hungry, that's all.

(*Exit*, C. *and* R., *with* SIR GEOFFRY CHAMPNEYS)

MID. (*aside to* CLARISSA) Miss Champneys, what's your candid opinion of your nephew?

CLAR. A *numskull!* (*Exit*, C. *and* R.)

MID. She IS a sensible woman. Charley, not to put too fine a point upon it, your friend's a *fool*. I say it deliberately, Charley, he's a h'ass.

CHAR. (*deprecatingly*) Oh, dad!

MID. And his father destines him for a public career. Ha! ha! Him ever take the public—why, he ain't got it in him to take a beer-shop.

CHAR. (*aside*) Is it that *he* has grown more vulgar, or that *I* have grown more sensitive? Anyhow, it jars terribly. But who am *I* to criticise—what should I have been but for his generosity—his—Bah! Ignorant—H-less as he is, I'd sooner have him for a father than twenty stuck-up Sir Geoffry Champneys.

MID. (*sitting*) And now, Charley, that we're alone, my dear fellow, tell your old dad what your impressions of foreign parts were. When I was your age the Continent was a sealed book to them as wasn't wealthy. There was no Cook's excursions then, Charley; leastaways, they seldom went further than White Condick Gardens or Beulah Spor, when they in general come back with their bonnets a one side, and wep' when they was spoke to 'arsh. No, no, you've been born when there was the march o' intellect, and Atlantic cables and other curious things, and naturally you've benefited thereby. So of course you're a scholar, and seen a deal. Paris now—nice place, ain't it?

CHAR. Glorious!

MID. 'Ow about the 'orse flesh?

CHAR. A myth.

MID. Railly though! And I suppose frogs is fallacies. Only to think.

CHAR. Paris is a paradise. But Italy—well, there!

MID. But ain't it a mass of lazeyroneys?

CHAR. A mere libel. A land of romance, beauty, tradition, poetry! Milan! Venice! Verona! Florence!

MID. Where the *ile* comes from.

CHAR. Rome! Naples!

MID. That's where Vesoovius is, ain't it?

CHAR. Yes.

MID. Was it "fizzin'" when you was there, Charley?

CHAR. No. There was no eruption when I was there.

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MID. That's wrong, you know, that's wrong. I didn't limit you, Charley; I said "See everything," and I certainly expected as you'd insist upon an eruption.

CHAR. But, my dear dad, I saw everything else—Pompeii and Herculaneum.

MID. Eh?

CHAR. Pompeii and Herculaneum—they were *ruined*, you know.

MID. Two unfortnit Italian warehousemen, I suppose.

CHAR. Nonsense! They were buried, you remember.

MID. And why *not?* It'd be a pretty thing to refuse an unlucky firm as went broke a decent—

CHAR. You don't understand.

MID. (*bluntly*) No, I *don't*.

CHAR. But Germany, dad—the Rhine—"the castled crags of Drachenfels"—the Castle of Erhenbreitstein—

MID. Aaron who? Some swell German Jew, I suppose.

CHAR. And the German women. (*nudges him*)

MID. Charles, I'm *surprised*. I'm simply—a—What are they like, Charley? (*gets closer to him*)

CHAR. (*sighs*) Hah!

MID. Lost your heart, eh?

CHAR. Not to a German girl, oh no—the lady *I* met who—

SIR G. (*heard without*) Well, we may as well join our friends.

CHAR. (*aside. Rises*) Here's Talbot's delightful father. I wouldn't swop parents with him for all his high breeding. Our heart's blood's a trifle cloudy, perhaps, but it *flows* freely—his is so terribly pure it hardly takes the trouble to trickle. No, Talbot, old fellow, I don't envy you your father. (*goes up*, L., *and joins* MIDDLEWICK)

SIR GEOFFRY *enters, followed by* TALBOT, C. *and* R.

SIR G. (*coming down*, R.) But really, Talbot, you must have *some* ideas on what you have seen.

TAL. What's the use of having ideas, when you can pick 'em up in the guide books?

SIR G. (*pleased*) Ah, then you *are* fond of *reading*? Good.

TAL. Reading! Ha! ha! I hate it. (*sits*, R. C.)

SIR G. (*trying to excuse him*) Well, well, perhaps *some* fathers set too great a value on books. After all, one's fellow man is the best volume to study. And as one who I hope may ripen into a statesman—your general appearence strongly reminds me of Pitt, by-the-bye—perhaps you are right.

MID. (*aside, to* CHARLEY) Finest you ever saw. Sir Geoffry, we shall be back shortly. (*Exit*, L. D., *with* CHARLEY)

SIR G. And you actually saw nothing in the Rhine.

TAL. Oh, yes, I *did*.

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SIR. G. That's well.

TAL. No end of *mud*.

SIR. G. But Cologne now?

TAL. Famous for it's Cathedral and its smells. Both, I regret to say, unfinished.

SIR G. But Germany, generally?

TAL. Detestable.

SIR. G. Switzerland. Come, you were a long time there. There you saw nature in all its grandeur. Your Alpine experiences were——

TAL. Limited—*very* limited. I *admired* those venturesome beings who risked their necks, but it was at a distance. I can't say a *respectful* distance for I thought them fools.

SIR G. No doubt you were right. (*aside*) Prudence, caution, forethought—excellent qualities. (*to him*) Italy?

TAL. *Second-hand* sort of country. Things, as a rule, give you a notion of being unredeemed pledges. Everything old and cracked. Didn't care for it. Jolly glad to get to Paris.

SIR G. (*with a relish*) Ha! The Louvre, eh?

TAL. Yes. I preferred "Mabille."

SIR G. A *public* building?

TAL. Rather. But even Paris palls on a fellow.

SIR G. (*rising and taking his hand*) I *see*, Talbot, like a true Champneys you prefer your native land to all these meretricious foreign places. Well, dear boy, you've a glorious career before you, and it only rests with you to follow it up. I have arranged a marriage——

TAL. A what!

SIR G. Not *arranged* it exactly, but it *can* be arranged—*shall* be.

TAL. (*quietly*) Provided, of course, I approve of the lady.

SIR G. Eh! *You* approve! What have *you* got to do with it?

TAL. Quite as much as *she* has, and rather more than *you*, considering *I* should have to live with her and *you* wouldn't.

SIR G. (*annoyed*) Talbot, I'm afraid you have picked up some low Radical opinions during your residence abroad. I expect obedience. I have done all a father can for a son. You will wed, sir, as *I* wish; you will espouse my politics, be returned for Lufton by *my* influence, and——

TAL. Unless Charley Middlewick chooses to *stand*——

SIR G. (*in horror*) Charley Middlewick chooses to stand?

TAL. In which case I——

SIR G. Yes?

TAL. Should *sit down*.

SIR G. (*sits back*) Talbot Champneys, you surprise me—you would me. You have received every advantage that

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money could procure—you have come back after your lengthened foreign experiences, *not*—I must admit with pain—*not* what I *quite* expected. Possibly I looked for too much, but surely it was not an extravagant hope to indulge in that you would obey me in the one important step in a man's life—his marriage. The lady I have selected is wealthy, young, and handsome. She is on a visit to your aunt, so you will have ample opportunity for ingratiating yourself. You will not thwart me in this, my dear Talbot? (*taking his hand*)

TAL. Well, before promising anything you must trot her out.

SIR G. Trot her out?

TAL. Yes, yes, put her through her paces—let's judge of her points. You don't expect a fellow to buy a pig in a poke?

SIR G. Hem! (*aside*) Very remarkable language. If anybody else spoke so, I should say it was vulgar, but *my son!* It's—ha! ha!—eccentricity; his great-uncle Joseph was eccentric—he——- (*looks aside at* TALBOT *and sighs deeply*)

TAL. (*aside*) Married whether I like it or *not*. Not if I know it. I'm going to "go it" a bit before *I* settle down. I *have* gone it a *bit* already, and I'm going to "go it" a bit *more*. It's the governor's fault; he shouldn't have mapped out my career with compass and rule. A man's not an express train, to be driven along a line of rails and never allowed to shunt on his *own* account. There Charley's father let him have his fling and no questions asked. The governor's had his hobby—let him pay for it—he can *do* it.

CLARISSA *has entered, spoken briefly aside to* SIR GEOFFRY *and is now down beside* TALBOT.

CLAR. Talbot, it is so delightful to have you back again. I shall now have such charming evenings with you at chess.

TAL. At what?

CLAR. Chess—the king of games.

TAL. Do you call it a *game*? Ha! ha! No, thankee; life's too short for chess.

CLAR. Well, well, we'll say backgammon.

TAL. I don't mind *saying* backgammon, but you don't catch me *playing* backgammon.

CLAR. Well, then, we must even continue our usual cosy evenings. *I* do my wool-work whilst your papa reads us the debates. That's our regular evening's programme.

TAL. (*aside*) They must have had a rollicking time of it. The debates! a dozen columns of dulness filtered through your father. Not for Talbot.

CLAR. But now we have music. Miss Melrose plays charmingly. Do you like music?

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TAL. Ye-e-s. I don't like *pieces*, you know—five-and-twenty minutes of fireworks. I like anything with a good chorus.

CLAR. Ah, so does Miss Melrose's *cousin*.

SIR. G. (*at* CLARISSA, *to stop her*) He-hem! He-hem!

CLAR. (*aside*) I forgot.

TAL. (*suspiciously, aside*) Halloa! why did he make that elaborate but utterly ineffective attempt to cough down the *cousin?* (*looks at* SIR GEOFFRY *and* CLARISSA) I see it *all* at a glance. The heiress is to be flung at my *head*, not the cousin at my *heart*. Future, luck, destiny, and all the *lot* of you, I see my fate. I marry that cousin.

SIR. G. (*aside to* CLARISSA) Mary Melrose, the cousin, must be sent away.

CLAR. (*aside*) But she won't *go*.

SIR G. Talbot is a—Talbot is a——

CLAR. Talbot's a fool.

SIR G. (*wounded, yet proud*) Clarissa Champneys, Talbot is *my* son.

CLAR. Geoffry Champneys, Talbot is *my, nephew*. I only wish I could exchange him for young Mr. Middlewick.

SIR G. You irritate me—you incense me—go to the *deuce*, Clarissa!

CLAR. Ha! ha! Come along, Talbot; let's go and see Mr. Middlewick's pigs, perhaps *they'll* interest you. (*takes his arm*)

TAL. (*has been taking out a large cigar*) You don't mind my smoking?

CLAR. Not a bit.

TAL. D'ye think the pigs 'll object?

CLAR. (*aside*) He's an idiot.

TAL. (*aside*) She's a nuisance. (*to her*) Tell us all about the *cousin*. (*they go out*)

SIR G. Of course women can never hold their tongues. Mary Melrose *is* pretty—penniless though. Mischievous too as a girl can well be. And no taste—goes to sleep when I read the debates. Wakes up when it's time to say "good night," and wants to play billiards. A very dangerous young woman. (VIOLET MELROSE *heard without*, C. *and* R.)

VIO. Now, Mary, you must promise to behave yourself, or you shall *not* come out with me again.

SIR G. That's Violet, that's the *heiress*—and of course her cousin Mary with her. Confound it! They're as inseparable as—I'll try and walk off Talbot. He must see and love *Miss* Melrose. Yes, why not "love?" My father commanded *me* to love, and I was too dutiful a son not to obey him on the *instant*. I *loved* madly—*to order*. (*Exit hastily*, L. D.)

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Enter VIOLET MELROSE.

VIO. Where can they have got to?

Enter MARY MELROSE—*the poor cousin—both dressed in the best taste.*

MARY. What a handsome place. Looks awfully new though, doesn't it? Seems as if it was painted and decorated yesterday, and furnished in the middle of the night—in order to be ready for visitors this morning. I seem to smell the hay and sacking that enveloped the legs of the chairs and tables. Don't *you*, Violet?

VIO. Certainly *not*. Mary, don't make remarks.

MARY. Why not? I *like* to make remarks.

VIO. Yes, you like to do a great many things you *shouldn't* do.

MARY. So does every one. If one's always to do what's proper and correct, life might as well be all rice pudding and toast and water. I hate them *both*, they're so dreadfully wholesome.

VIO. I don't know what excuse we shall make for coming here. It looks as if *we* were impatient to see the young men.

MARY. So we are. At least I am. We've seen no one of the male sex at old Champneys'.

VIO. Mary!

MARY. Begging his pardon. Sir Geoffry Champneys—*Bart's*—no one, under the age of fifty.

VIO. Why, Mary, there's Mr. Sedative, he isn't thirty.

MARY. Oh, Sedative's a curate and don't count. Besides, he blushes when you speak to him, and, altogether, he's a muff. He's awfully good and devoted to his mother and all that, but—well, there, he isn't my sort.

VIO. I don't know who *is* your sort, Mary.

MARY. Oh, it's all very well for *you*, you know; you can pick and choose—if you haven't picked and chosen.

VIO. Mary, you—how can you?

MARY. Violet, my dear, don't try to impose upon *me*. I know the impression young Morton made upon your susceptible heart. I tried hard to ensnare him, but you beat me. Oh, you *quiet* ones, I wouldn't trust you out of my sight—(*aside*) or in it for the matter of that.

VIO. You're always thinking of love and marriage and all that nonsense.

MARY. Of course I am. There's nothing else worth thinking about. It's all very well for *you*—you're rich, and you have your tenants, and your pensioners, and your dependents, and I don't know *what*, to interest you. I've nothing. (*sighs*) I wish I was rich.

VIO. Then marry some one with money.

MARY. Never! (*after a slight pause*) Unless he's *nice, then* I

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will—oh, yes, I don't go in for "love in a cottage." I never could understand the theory of "bread and cheese and kisses." I *hate* bread and cheese.

VIO. (*with admonitory finger*) *And*——

MARY. (*sighs*) I know nothing about the rest.

VIO. You mercenary girl. Mark me, you'll marry a rich man.

MARY. Certainly—if I like him.

VIO. But as for a *poor* one?

MARY. I'll marry him if I like him better.

VIO. I can't make you out; you're simply the most——

Enter CHARLES MIDDLWICK *quickly.*

MARY. (*aside*) Morton!

CHAR. Why, Miss Melrose!

VIO. Oh, can I be—— (*sinks into chair*)

MARY. If anybody'd catch me I think I could faint.

CHAR. Let me. (*catches her in his arms*) My dear Miss Melrose, I——

VIO. (*recovers suddenly*) Mr. Morton!!

CHAR. Miss Melrose! (*leaves* MARY *and goes to* VIOLET) Can I—*can* I believe my eyes? What are you doing here?

VIO. What are *you* doing here?

CHAR. Morton isn't my name. I assumed it at Bonn, like a fool, because of a scrape I got into with an offensive and warlike student, which resulted in his being rather severely wounded—an insolent hound. No, I've come back here to my home, to my father, and——

VIO. (*aside, romantically*) Come back to his father, to his home! Mary, is—*is* this destiny?

MARY. (*aside to her*) If it *is* destiny, dear, don't you think I'd better go away for a short time?

VIO. No, no, Mary, don't go, by any means.

MARY. I wouldn't *dream* of such a thing. (*exit* C. *and* R.)

CHAR. Life's made up of surprises. Only to think of meeting you here.

VIO. You took no particular trouble to find out *where* to meet me, did you?

CHAR. You left Vienna so abruptly. You wouldn't have had me advertise?

VIO. Really!

CHAR. Lost, stolen, or strayed, a young lady, &c., &c. Anyone restoring her to her disconsolate admirer, Charles—a—

VIO. Mr. Morton, upon my word, I——

CHAR. (*ardently*) And upon *my* word this is the happiest moment of my life; no, it's run hard by the *other* moment, when under the shadow of the trees, with the wild river rushing at our feet, you half-*half* whispered a word or two

that led me to hope. Oh, Violet, I swear by—by—by those eyes—and what could a man swear by *truer* (*or, query, bluer*) —I've never ceased to think of you, to *dream* of you——

Vio. To *dream* of me? What, not when you've been awake?

Char. I've never been awake; life, since we parted, has been one long sweet siesta in which your image was ever foremost. The chief cause, the *only* cause of my hastening home was to search *you* out. I knew your wandering ways, and meant to track you. You said you intended staying the summer at Biarritz. But fortune has favoured me as she never yet favoured man and placed the prize in my arms.

Vio. (*pleased, but trying to be severe*) In *where?*

Char. (*throwing his arm round her*) *There!* (*slight pause*)

Vio. Mr. Morton, I'm ASHAMED of you.

Char. Miss Melrose, I'm *proud* of YOU.

Vio. Really, I——

Char. You wouldn't have me think you a flirt—a coquette?

Vio. Indeed, no.

Char. You *would* be one if when you breathed those half-dozen delicious words, you only meant to trifle with me. I've lived upon that sentence ever since—looking ardently forward to the day when I could present myself in *propria persona* as I do now. Violet, don't turn away, for——

(Sir Geoffry *coughs without*)

Vio. (*rather agitated*) There's somebody coming.

Char. Confound it! in this life there always *is* somebody coming. (*goes up*, L.)

Sir G. (*enters*) I can't find him—he isn't with the pigs. (*to* Violet) I regret that my son——

Vio. Why, Sir Geoffry—you must have intended it as a wicked surprise. Your son and I are acquainted.

Sir G. Has he, then, already——

Vio. Oh, before——

Sir G. Good gracious! You must not mind his being a little bashful and retiring.

Vio. Oh, I didn't find him so at *all*.

Sir G. (*aside*) The deuce she didn't! met before?

Vio. At Vienna.

Sir G. Is it possible? And you don't—don't dislike him?

Vio. Oh, who *could!*

Sir G. (*aside*) I can't believe my—— The young rascal! all his opposition was *assumed* then—a deep, young dog. Ha! ha! Well, he took me in. Ha! ha! Yes, he took me in.

Char. (*down*) I hope, Sir Geoffry, we shall——

Sir G. Yes, yes, young gentleman, all in good time, but just at present you see, we——

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VIO. I should like to hear, though, what your son was about to say.

SIR G. (*seeing with horror the mistake*) My—my son! *This* person—he's no son of mine.

CHAR. (*half aside*) No—thank Heaven!

VIO. (*shrinks from him; bitterly*) *Twice* an impostor!

CHAR. Violet, I——

Enter, L. D., MIDDLEWICK *and* MISS CLARISSA; *at* C., MARY *and* TALBOT.

MID. It's true, mum. Every one on 'em was agin me doing it. Halloa—who's the gals?

At hearing the intensely vulgar voice of MIDDLEWICK, VIOLET *has shrunk, and, evidently shocked, assumes a cold look.* CHARLEY *perceives it, and by his expression shews he resents her manner.*

TAL. (*to* MARY) D'ye know I feel as if I'd known you *ever* so long?

MARY. And I've quite taken to *you—fact*——

SIR GEOFFRY, *who has observed this with suppressed rage, takes* TALBOT *by the arm, with a slight wrench, brings him to* VIOLET.

CHAR. (*aside*) I could read a volume in her altered look.

SIR G. This, Violet, is—is *my son!*

CHAR. (*seizing* MIDDLEWICK'S *hand with a grasp of affection; proudly*) And *this*, Miss Melrose, is *my father!*

ACT DROP.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Drawing-room at* SIR GEOFFRY CHAMPNEYS'; *Doors*, R. *and* L., *and French windows to conservatory.* KEMPSTER *discovered.*

KEMP. Well, things are coming to a pretty pass when we have such visitors to dinner as Mr. Middlewick, *senor*. Three 'elps to soup, and his napkin tucked round his neck for all the world like a carver at a *cafe*—a common *cafe*. (*down*) And yet, somehow, I fancy his 'art's in the right place; I know his 'and is (that's his pocket) a precious deal oftener than the governor's. I've heard, too, as the servants at his place are fed on the fat of the land. Hem! *we* ain't. There's a deal too much *show* here. Three mutton cutlets for four people, who've the consolation of knowing the dishes is 'all angled, though when a party's hungry silver ain't satisfying.

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Enter SIR GEOFFRY *and* MIDDLEWICK, *in evening dress,* MIDDLEWICK'S *a little old fashioned and extravagant—large, double-breasted white waistcoat and plenty of necktie.*

SIR G. Yes, yes, Mr. Middlewick, you are perfectly right. (*to* KEMPSTER) Send our coffee in here.

KEMP. (*aside*) They're a-gettin' thick, they're a-gettin' uncommon thick. (*Exit,* L. D.)

SIR G. You enjoyed your dinner?

MID. (*sits*) Fust-rate. *Hay one.*

SIR. G. Good! And you don't mind leaving your wine for a chat?

MID. Not a bit. Can't abear claret, and port pays me out. I never knew what gout was when I had my shop.

SIR G. He-hem!

MID. (*aside*) He always shies at the shop. Well, I won't tread on his aristocratic corns; it ain't fair, for after all, *they're* tender, and *I'm* 'eavy.

SIR G. I'm delighted, Mr. Middlewick, to welcome under my roof so successful a representative of the commercial spirit of the age. Champneys Hall, as a rule, has been honoured by the visits of people of birth *solely*. Your presence here is a pleasing exception.

MID. Sir Geoffry, you do me *honour*. Of course money's always a——

SIR G. Not *wholly*. I anticipate your remark. Personal worth must count for something.

MID. Fust-rate theory—*philantropic* and all that—but it don't wash, Sir Geoffry. Take *yourself*, for instance. When you stroll about 'ere, everybody you meet touches his 'at. How many does so when you walks down Fleet Street?

SIR G. Everybody touches his hat to *you*, Mr. Middlewick.

MID. Not a bit of it. See here; *that's* what they touches their 'ats to. (*slaps his pocket, which rattles with the sound of money*) Money makes the *mare* to go—the *mare*—rubbish! It sets the whole *stable* a gallopin'! If I go into a shop shabby the counter-skipper treats me familiar, pre-aps 'aughty. If I wear new broad cloth he calls me "Sir." There you 'ave it in a nutshell.

SIR G. Mr. Middlewick, I admit that money exercises an undue influence in the world and to an extent with vulgar—I repeat, *vulgar* minds—elbows birth, worth, virtue, and—a—all that sort of thing a little out of the way. That is why so many of us—I say us—live in the country, where—where——

MID. Jes' so. *I* know. You're somebody 'ere—nobody there. Quite right; that's why *I* settled in the country.

SIR G. Your career has been a remarkable one.

MID. Extry-ordinary. I was lucky from a baby. Found a

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farden when I was two years old, and got a five-shilling piece for 'olding a 'orse when I was playing truant at the age of six. When I growed up everything I touched turned up trumps. I believe if I'd purchased a ship-load of Dutch cheeses, the man with the van 'ud a' delivered me Stiltons. I believe as the Government went to war a purpose to give me a openin' for contracks. Bacon! Well, there—bless your 'art, what I made out of bacon alone was a little independence. I never meet a pig in the road that I don't feel inclined to take off my 'at to him.

SIR G. Ha! ha! ha!

MID. Every speculation proved a success. It seemed as if I was in the secret of life's lucky bag, and had been put up to where I was to pick out the prizes. Some folks said, "'Old 'ard, Perkyn, my boy, you'll run aground." Well, I *didn't* "'old 'ard," I "'eld on," and here I am, Sir Geoffry, at the age of fifty three able to buy up any 'arf a dozen nobs in the county.

SIR G. (*aside*) Nobs! He *is* a PILL for all his gilding.

MID. But if *I'm* not a gentleman, there's my boy.

SIR G. Who, I have a sort of suspicion, admires Violet Melrose.

MID. What! The stuck-up rich gal. No! no!

SIR G. (*eagerly*) You think *not?*

MID. Certain. My son knows better than to thwart *me*. Miss Melrose snubbed me when we fust met—has cold-shouldered me ever since. Do you suppose my boy Charley would have anything to say to a young woman as despised his father?

SIR G. (*shaking hands*) My dear Middlewick, you delight me. Of *course* not. I was foolishly suspicious. I want *my* son to marry Miss Melrose. He will do so of course—for he has never disobeyed me; he has been brought up strictly to acknowledge my authority and——

MID. And *won't*, I'll warrant. Your system's a mistake—*mine's* the correct one. I've always given my boy his fling—never baulked him from a baby. If he cried for the moon we give him a Cheshire cheese immediate—*that* being the nearest substitute 'andy. *Now* he'd obey my slightest wish.

SIR G. Will he! Ha! ha! Let us hope so.

Enter VIOLET MELROSE.

VIO. Interrupting a *tête-à-tête*, I'm afraid.

SIR G. Not at all, Miss Melrose.

MID. Oh, no, not at all—not at all. (*rises and going up. Aside*) "Taturtate"—always coming out with her *Italian*. Ha, she's not a patch upon the cousin; she's the gal for *my* money.

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SIR G. (*down. Aside in an undertone to* VIOLET) Miss Melrose—may I say *Violet*—I trust Talbot's manner, modest as it is, has impressed you. You must not take him for the foo— I mean you mustn't imagine he is the less ardent because he doesn't talk poetry like young Mr. Middlewick, or——

VIO. (*with temper*) Oh, don't mention *him*, Sir Geoffry—*that* young gentleman seems to ignore my existence.

SIR G. (*aside*) Good. Son sees father's snubbed and retaliates. (*to her*) Ha! ha! do you know—pardon my absurdity—at first I actually imagined there was some trifling tenderness in that quarter. But I see by your face I was mistaken. You are above being dazzled by good looks.

VIO. (*with a natural burst*) And he is good-looking, isn't he?

SIR G. (*a little haughtily*) He—hem! He's *long*—but nothing *distingué*—Talbot now is not what one would call a striking figure, but there's a concealed intellectuality—a hidden something or other—you'll understand what I mean but I'm at a loss for the word at the moment—that is none the less effective in the long run—(*with pleasant earnestness*) a—then, my dear Violet, he's the heir to a baronetcy. He's an embryo statesman, and he *adores* you. Didn't you observe him at dinner? He ate nothing—*drank* nothing—which—and I say it at the risk of being considered a too observant host—is *more* than can be said of young Middlewick.

VIO. (*aside*) That's true, for I watched him.

CHAR. (*heard without,* L.) Ha! ha! ha! *You* play billiards! why, you know as much of the game as the King of Ashanti knows of——

TAL. (*heard,* L.) Ha! ha! Play *you* any day in the week.

MID. (*down*) I say, Sir Geoffry, them boys are going it, ain't they?

VIO. (*aside*) "Them boys!"

MID. (*aside*) I see her sneer.

SIR G. (*aside*) Every time he opens his mouth improves Talbot's chance.

Enter CHARLEY *and* TALBOT. CHARLEY *is a little excited with wine, but not in the least tipsy—he has been helping himself freely to drown his annoyance at* VIOLET'S *hauteur and evident horror of his father.* TALBOT'S *manner is of the same washed-out, flabby nature as previously shewn.*

CHAR. Ha! ha! ha! Here's Talbot Champneys trying to argue with me about billiards. Why, man, you can't see as far as the spot ball.

SIR G. The fact of being short-sighted is scarcely a happy subject for jesting.

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VIO. (*with suppressed temper*) I quite agree with you, Sir Geoffry.

CLAR. (*has entered*) It's aristocratic; double eye-glasses look rather *distingué*, I think.

CHAR. (*at* VIOLET) Yes, those who are *not* aristocratic may sometimes suffer from the affection. There are short-sighted fools in the world who are *not* swells.

VIO. (*aside*) He thinks that severe.

MID. Bless your 'art, yes; we had a carman as was always driving into everythink; at last he run over a boy in the Boro', and that got him his quietum.

CHAR. Yes, yes, you told us before about him.

MID. (*aside*) Don't, Charley, don't. If you only brought me out to shut me up, I might as well be a tellyscoop.

SIR G. (*aside to* VIOLET) Charming papa-in-law he'll make to somebody.

VIO. Don't, don't. (*looking at* CHARLEY) He's looking daggers at me, and I've done nothing.

TAL. It's rather rich your talking of beating me at billiards, considering that I've devoted the last three years to billiards and nothing *else*.

SIR G. (*aside*) The deuce he has! That's pleasant for a father to hear. Oh, a—exaggeration.

TAL. It's rather amusing your bragging of rivalling *me*. And when you talk about my not being able to see the spot ball, all I can say is——

CHAR. Ha! ha! ha! If you *can't*, you've a capital eye for the *pocket*. (*at* VIOLET. VIOLET *shews she sees the thrust*)

MID. Ah, well, *bagatelle's* more in my way. When me and a few neighbours used to take our glass at the Peterboro' Arms, we——

CHAR. Yes, yes, father——

MID. (*aside*) He's bit. That gal's bit him. It'll be an awkward day for Charley when he shews he's ashamed of his governor.

CLAR. I agree with Mr. Middlewick—bagatelle's charming.

VIO. So it is, Miss Champneys.

CLAR. So innocent.

SIR G. (*rising*) Come, who's for a game of billiards then? I never touch a cue, but I'll play you fifty up, Mr. Middlewick, and my sister here and your son shall see all fair. Come, you shall see that there is even a worse player in the world than yourself. (*aside*) There couldn't be a better opportunity for leaving Talbot and Violet alone. (*to him*) What say?

MID. I'm agreeable—you must teach me though.

CLAR. I will do that, if you will allow me.

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MID. Only too 'appy. (*goes off*, R. D., *with* CLARISSA)

SIR G. (*aside to* TALBOT) Now's your time, bring matters to a crisis.

VIO. (*taking* SIR GEOFFRY'S *arm the other side*) Sir Geoffry, I'LL back *you*.

SIR G. (*going towards* R. D., *annoyed. Aside*) Confound it! (*to* VIOLET) You really are most—a—I can't play a bit——

As they exit VIOLET *gives a sort of half sneering, half mischievous laugh at* CHARLEY, *who can with difficulty restrain his annoyance. When they are off, he turns, finding himself face to face with* TALBOT. TALBOT *is bringing out a pipe, and filling it.*

CHAR. Well.

TAL. Well.

CHAR. What are you going to do?

TAL. What are you?

CHAR. I don't know.

TAL. I do. I'm going to have a smoke in the stable. Also a good think.

CHAR. A good what?

TAL. Think. I'm in love.

CHAR. *You!*

TAL. Why shouldn't I be? You tall chaps always think you can monopolise all the love-making in the world. You can love *short*, just the same as you can love *long*. I tell you I'm *gone*. D'ye hear? *Gone*.

CHAR. (*bitterly*) I'm happy to hear it. I shall be happier when you *prove* the fact. (*moves away*)

TAL. I'm off. When you want a *weed* you know where to find me. (*Exit*)

CHAR. In *love*, is he? I don't wonder at it—she'd entice a hermit from his *cell*—and—and—send him back *sold*. She can't have a heart. (*enter* MARY) Ah, women are all alike.

MARY. What a frightful observation! And at the top of your voice too.

CHAR. I mean it.

MARY. No, you don't.

CHAR. If I don't may I be——

MARY. Jilted?

CHAR. Jilted. The foolish phrase for one of the cruellest crimes—I say it advisedly, *crimes*—that can disgrace *female*—I won't say *human*—nature.

MARY. Dear! dear! dear!

CHAR. (*with feeling*) Hearts are not playthings to be broken like children's drums just to see what's inside them. A man's feelings are not toys to be trifled with and tossed aside.

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Love in a true man means *love*—love pure and simple and unselfish—the devotion of his whole mind and being to one in whose weal or woe his very soul's wrapped up. With women ——

MARY. What a pity it is Talbot Champneys can't talk like you—and going into Parliament too.

CHAR. Talbot Champneys—yes—*his* relatives are well-spoken, well-born *somebodies*, and so she favours him.

MARY. She? Who?

CHAR. Absurd! there's only *one* she.

MARY. That's very polite to *me*, I'm sure.

CHAR. Oh, you know what I mean. In *my* eyes.

MARY. Exactly. But you don't monopolise all the visual organs of the universe. There are *other* eyes that may have looked *elsewhere*.

CHAR. Why, what on earth——

MARY. *(modestly)* I don't think Talbot *does* admire Violet.

CHAR. Eh?

MARY. Not so much as he does—a—somebody else.

CHAR. Why, *who* is there he could——

MARY. Well, upon my word—considering that *I*——*(pauses awkwardly)*

CHAR. Why, what a fool I've been!

MARY. And are.

CHAR. But—oh, impossible!

MARY. Thank you.

CHAR. No, I don't mean *that*, because, of course, you are a charming young lady, and——

MARY. Thank you again.

CHAR. I mean it's impossible on *your* side. I really believe Talbot to be not half a bad fellow in the main, but his manner, his appearance, and——

MARY. Oh, handsome men are like the shows at the fairs, you see all the best outside.

CHAR. There's some truth in that, perhaps.

MARY. Talbot Champneys isn't either the fool he looks or affects to be. He's wonderfully good-hearted, I *know*, for I watched his manner only yesterday towards a crippled beggar boy when he thought no one saw him; and—and he snubs his pompous old father like a—like a——

CHAR. A young cub.

MARY. Well, a young cub's better than an old bear. I don't believe in surface—I like to know what's inside. You've often noticed confectioners' tarts, with their proud upper-crust—hollow mockeries—delusive shams; when the knife dives into their dim recesses what does it disclose? fruit, occasionally; syrup, seldom; flavour, *never*. Now, Talbot's *not* a confectioner's tart.

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CHAR. No, I should say he was more of the *cake*.

MARY. Never mind, I *like* cake. He may be eccentric, but his heart's in the right place.

CHAR. That means *you're* got it.

MARY. He hasn't told me so.

CHAR. Until you make him I——

MARY. Make him! well, you *are*——

SIR G. (*heard*, R.) Don't mention it—a trifle.

MID. (*heard*, R.) 'Pon my word, I'm downright——

SIR G. No, no; not at all.

CHAR. (*earnestly*) You will—you *will* make him declare himself, Mary Melrose, and make me the——

Enter SIR GEOFFRY *and* MIDDLEWICK, *followed by* VIOLET. MARY *and* CHARLEY *sit up*, L.

MID. I declare I wouldn't have done such a thing for any money. (*aside*) I knew I should come to grief at them billiards.

SIR G. (*blandly*) My dear Mr. Middlewick, commonest thing with beginners. Cutting the billiard cloth with the cue is a trifling accident that might happen with any one. Don't mention it any more. (*aside*) An awkward brute. Treated the table like his confounded counter.

MID. (*aside*) Serves me right, trying to play billiards, and poker-back pretending HE couldn't, and him all the time a regular dab. He's up to these grand games, but one of these days I'll *loore* him on to *skittles*—and *astonish* him.

SIR G. (*aside to* MIDDLEWICK, *pleased*) Middlewick, look, my dear sir. (*points to* CHARLEY *and* MARY, *in conversation up stage on sociable*, L.) D'ye see that? Ha! ha! Seem rather interested in each other's conversation, eh? (*nudges him*)

MID. Why, anything more like spooning I——

SIR G. I hope, for *your* sake, it may be so; that girl is worth a thousand of her haughty cousin.

MID. (*seizing his hand*) You're right, Sir Geoffry. And I'm proud to hear a swell as *is* a swell give vent to such sentiments—they do you *honour*.

VIO. (*aside*) He means to wound me—to insult me. Mary cannot willingly have lent herself to so mean and poor a trick. *She* is honest—but he— (*enter* CLARISSA; *goes to* MIDDLEWICK) How taken up with each other they seem. There isn't an atom of jealousy about my disposition, but I'd give the *world* to know what they're talking about. (CHARLEY *and* MARY *laugh*) Now they're laughing. Perhaps at *me*. Oh, how I wish Mary wasn't poor—I'd have *such* a quarrel with her.

MID. (*aside, has been talking with* CLARISSA) A more sensible woman I never come across.

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CLAR. (*aside*) A delightful person *if* a little eccentric.

MID. (*aside*) I'll find out what *she* thinks of my sentiments regarding Charley's fancy.

CLAR. (*aside*) I hope his evident attentions to *me* have not been noticed by my brother.

MID. (*seated by her*) Miss Clarissa—nice name Clarissa.

CLAR. (*coquettishly*) Think so?

MID. Yes—I wouldn't change it for no other. Your other name I *would* though.

CLAR. (*aside*) What can he mean? These successful commercial people are so blunt and business-like—can he possibly be about to— (*sighs*) Well, I must say I consider him rather a fine man.

SIR G. (*to* VIOLET, *who has been and is watching* MARY *and* CHARLEY. SIR GEOFFRY *has sat beside her*) Depend upon it, ill-assorted marriages are a mistake. For instance, we'll say, young Middlewick there—the poor lad's in a false position.

VIO. (*aside, in temper*) He *is*—sitting by *her*.

SIR G. A husband's relations, too, should not be ignored. Should the young man marry a lady, imagine her humiliation at the periodical visits of "Papa."

VIO. (*turning to him, a little nettled*) And yet *you* tolerate him here—make much of him.

SIR G. My dear Violet, in the country one is obliged to swallow one's feelings occasionally. I take good care no one shall ever meet him for whom I have the least—a—he-hem! (*aside*) Nearly putting my foot in it there.

MIDDLEWICK *and* CLARISSA *have been very earnestly conversing.*

MID. Of course—of course when people get to a certain time of life they ought to settle.

CHARLEY *and* MARY *stroll off, C. and* R.

CLAR. My sentiments precisely.

MID. And after all high birth's all very well, but if the other party has the *money*——

CLAR. Certainly—certainly. It may be radical and all that sort of thing, but give me intellect before mere family. And I am worldly enough to revere success—such as *yours*, for instance.

MID. (*aside*) She certainly is one of the most sensible women I—and after all they'd make an uncommon handsome couple——

CLAR. Eh?

MID. Charley and——

SIR G. (*abruptly, and annoyed*) Clarissa, my dear, where on earth has Talbot got to?

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CLAR. (*rising, enraged at discovery of her mistake in* MIDDLEWICK) How should *I* know where he's got to!

SIR G. (*astonished*) Why, gracious me! My dear, I—(*aside to her, but aloud*) Remember, Clarissa, if you please, there are visitors present.

CLAR. Visitors indeed! Such canaille!

(*Goes up, and exit*)

MID. (*aside*) I heard you, my lady. So the old *one's* going in for snubs as well as—It's the last time me or Charley sets a foot in *this* 'ouse.

VIO. (*who has gone up to conservatory; looking off*) How mean I feel, watching them. I'll—I'll leave this house to-morrow.

SIR G. (*aside*) What on earth's the matter with the woman? Something's annoyed her, but she mustn't be rude to my guests. I have one system with my son, my servants, and—yes, and my *sister*. She must come back at once and—Miss Melrose—Middlewick, excuse me a moment or two.

(*Exit*, R. D.)

MID. All alone with Miss High-and-mighty! Hang me if I don't tackle her! You'll—you'll excuse *me*, MISS, but——

VIO. (*in horror*) Oh, pray don't say "Miss."

MID. (*softened*) Eh? (*aside*) not "Miss?" (*to her*) Well, then, we'll say "Voylet."

VIO. (*disgusted, but unable to restrain her amusement*) Mr. Middlewick, you really are *too* absurd!

She moves towards R. *door, and exits; as she does so*

CHARLEY *enters*, C., *from* L., *and is about to follow her.*

MID. (*aside*) If ever I set foot again in this house—(*catches* CHARLEY *by the arm, and turns him round abruptly towards himself*)

CHAR. Why, dad, I——

MID. Charley, where are you a going of?

CHAR. (*annoyed*) Oh! father, I really——

MID. (*severely*) Charles Middlewick, you're a going after that young lady.

CHAR. Well, sir, if I *am?*

MID. Charley, I don't want you and me to fall out. We never have yet. All's been smooth and pleasant with me hitherto, but when I *do* cut up rough, Charley, I cut up *that* rough as the road a being repaired afore the steam roller tackles it is simply a feather bed compared to your father.

CHAR. I don't understand you.

MID. (*with suppressed passion*) Obey me and my nature's olive oil; go *again* me and it's *still* ile, but it's ile of *vitterel*.

CHAR. If, sir, you're alluding to my feelings towards Miss Melrose, I—

MID. I *am*. Think no more of her. Between you and

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her there's a gulf, Charles Middlewick, and that gulf's grammar. Perhaps you think I'm too ignorant to know what pride means. I'm *not*. If you ever cared for this stuck-up madam you must forget her. (*determined*) She ain't my sort; never will be, and she shan't be my daughter-in-law neither.

CHAR. You have always prided yourself on allowing me my own way in everything—it was your *system*, as you called it—and *now*, when it comes to a matter in which my whole future happiness is involved, you are cruel enough to——

MID. (*sharply*) Cruel only to be kind, Charley. You wouldn't marry a woman who despised your father? (CHARLEY *moves aside, ashamed; pause*) If you would, if you do, I'll cut you off with a shilling. I—I—(*in a rage*) Why don't you meet me half way and say you'll *obey* me, you shilly-shally numskull!

CHAR. (*in a passion*) You have no right to speak like this to me, if you *are* my father. (*pause;* MIDDLEWICK *astonished*)

MID. (*in softer voice*) He's right, he's *quite* right; calling names never did no good at any time. (*to him*) Leastaways *not* a numskull, Charley, of course; that was a "lapsy lingo," a slip of the pen, you know. I'm speaking for your good. You're her equal in everything except *one*, Charley—I'm rich, but I'm a common, ignorant man. Wait, anyhow, until—until I—I—ain't here to disgrace you. (*turns aside, breaks down*)

CHAR. (*after slight pause*) My dear, kind dad, there's nothing in the world I wouldn't sacrifice to please you——

MID. (*turns to him, pleased*) Ah?

CHAR. But in this instance——

MID. (*turning back grumpily*) Hah!

CHAR. I can never be happy without Violet Melrose.

MID. Then make up your mind to be miserable.

CHAR. The appearance of superciliousness which you imagine you——

MID. *Imagine*—but it ain't for you to bandy any further words with *me*. If you disappoint me, *disobey* me, *defy* me, take the consequences. Say good-bye to your father, live on Violet Melrose's money, but don't be surprised when your grand lady wife taunts you with your mean position and flings your vulgar father's butter shop in your teeth. (CHARLEY *attempts to speak*) Not a word—I've said my say, and what I *have* said, Charles Middlewick's, my ultipomatum.

(*Exit*, L. D.)

CHAR. (*distracted*) Every word he said was true, and cut like a knife! How can I tell him that I know Violet's apparent supercilious manner is only on the surface? That—But *is* it? Am I fooling myself all the while? Does my blind

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admiration make me—I'll speak to her, learn the real depth of this seeming pride, and—— (*is going*, R.)

MARY *enters*, R.

MARY. Oh, such fun!

CHAR. (*disgusted*) Fun!

MARY. Yes, I've completely taken in the old gentleman.

CHAR. I believe you're *capable* of it.

MARY. With half-a-dozen joking remarks in admiration of *you* I've completely put him off the scent. He firmly belives that we're awfully spoons, and that his son's only to ask Violet to be accepted.

CHAR. So you did *that*, did you?

MARY. Yes, I did, and Sir Geoffry's simply in raptures at the success of his system, as he calls it, and *Violet* the——

CHAR. (*in rage*) You've made matters ten times worse with your meddling interference. You—you've widened the gulf, and still further estranged us. But come what may I'll speak out and bring her to the point, if it's under the baronet's very nose! I— *Ugh!* (*with an exclamation of intense vexation at* MARY, *exits*, R.)

MARY. (*after a blank look*) Moral! Mary Melrose, my dear, for the rest of your natural life never attempt to do anything kind for anybody. I'll become supremely selfish and settle down into a narrow-minded and highly acidulated old maid.

Enter TALBOT, R., *from* C.

TAL. Who's that talking about old maids?

MARY. I was.

TAL. Why, you're all alone.

MARY. Yes, I like to be alone.

TAL. That means I'm to——

MARY. Oh, *no*, you're——

TAL. Nobody. Don't count. Thanks.

MARY. I didn't *say* that.

TAL. No, but you *meant* it.

MARY. Why?

TAL. Because you didn't *say* it. (*pause*)

MARY. What do you mean?

TAL. What I say.

MARY. What's that?

TAL. Nothing.

MARY. Then you mean nothing.

TAL. On the contrary, I mean a lot, but I can't say it.

MARY. Then I wouldn't try.

TAL. I won't. (*slight pause*) I say, Miss Melrose, do you know I'm dreadfully afraid of you.

MARY. Am I so very terrible?

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TAL. You're so fearfully sensible, you know—so satirical and cutting, and "awfully clever," and I'm *not*, you know.

MARY. Not *what*, you know?

TAL. None of *that*, you know. I'm a—a—muff, that's what *I* am. I haven't got a second idea. I don't believe I've got a *first*, but I'll *swear* I haven't a second.

MARY. Well, at all events, you're not conceited.

TAL. What on earth have *I* got to be conceited about? What are *my* accomplishments? I can play a fair game of billiards, though I'm too short-sighted for cricket. I can stick on the maddest horse that ever gladdened a coroner, and I can smoke like—like *Sheffield*. Not much to recommend oneself to a woman, eh?

MARY. I don't know. Miss Melrose, for instance, my rich and handsome cousin, has a great admiration for the Guy Livingstone virtues.

TAL. Don't like her—at least, don't *admire* her.

MARY. Why not?

TAL. Because I've been commanded to. Private feelings ain't private soldiers—you can't order them about and drill them like dolls. Human nature's obstinate as a rule. Do you know how they get the pigs on board?

MARY. No.

TAL. Put their noses towards the vessel and then try and pull them away, *backwards*. The result is that they run up the plank into the vessel *immediately*. *I'm* a pig.

MARY. You don't say so?

TAL. And *my* sentiments are *pig-headed*, my governor's are *pig-tailed*—that's to say, old-fashioned—the old "school" strict obedience, marry according to *orders*, you know, eh? (*nudges her*) Ha! ha! Some of us know a trick worth two of that, eh?

MARY. Ha! ha! ha!

TAL. (*laughs with her*) You're a *sharp* one, *you* are. (*nudges her*)

MARY. So are *you*.

TAL. *Am* I, though?

MARY. Only in the *elbow*. Suppose you sit a little further off; you never crowd up so closely to Violet.

TAL. No, I'm not given to *poaching*.

MARY. Poaching! *Eggs?*

TAL. Eggs be—*hatched!* Haven't you seen Charley Middlewick loves her as much as—as— (*aside*) I'll *go* it now—I'm wound up *to* go it, and go it I *will*.

MARY. As much as *what?*

TAL. As I love *you*.

MARY. (*rising*) Mr. Champneys!

TAL. (*rising*) No, no, no, I don't mean *that*.

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MARY. *No!*

TAL. Yes, yes, I *do*, but in another way. I mean he doesn't love her *half* as much as I love *you*.

MARY. You don't know your own mind.

TAL. Don't want to. I want to know yours.

MARY. You don't mean half you say.

TAL. No, I don't. I mean it *all*.

MARY. Your father'd disown you.

TAL. So he might if I owned *you*.

MARY. You silly boy, what are you talking about? I haven't a penny in the world.

TAL. Even if you did possess that humble but heavy coin, it could scarce be considered *capital*, could it? A start at housekeeping on a ha'penny a-piece would be a trifle rash, not to say risky.

MARY. Housekeeping, indeed! Well, I like your impudence——

TAL. I *adore* yours.

MARY. I never was impertinent in my life.

TAL. Then don't contradict. When I say, "Be mine," don't say "Shan't."

MARY. I won't.

TAL. Won't *what?*

MARY. Say "shan't."

TAL. (*delighted*) Do you mean it?

MARY. Talbot, you've had too much wine.

TAL. I admit it.

MARY. You *have* admitted it. If your father suspected this he'd cut you off with a shilling.

TAL. That's fivepence a piece better than your penny. We're getting on.

MARY. You quite take one's breath away—I don't know what to say.

TAL. Let me say it for you.

MARY. No, no, I never was proposed to before.

TAL. How do you like it?

MARY. But I've *read* about people proposing and—and—(*innocently*) They've always gone on their knees.

TAL. I'll go on my *head* if it'll only please you.

MARY. No, no, don't, it might give way.

TAL. Well, as far a knee goes—*here* goes—there! (*kneels*)

MARY. And then the lover always made a beautiful speech.

TAL. *I* know. Most adorable of your sex, a cruel parent commands me to love another—I *won't*—I CAN'T—I adore *you*—you alone. I despise heiresses, I despise Parliamentary honours, a public career, and all that *bosh*. (SIR GEOFFRY *and* MIDDLEWICK *have appeared;* SIR GEOFFRY *now staggers.*

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and supports himself on MIDDLEWICK'S *arm*) I prefer love in a cottage. I *like* love—I like a cottage, where a fellow can smoke where he likes, and——

SIR G. (*bursting out*) You shall have your wish, sir. You shall have your love and your cottage, and your smoke and —and—(*breaking down*) Talbot—Talbot, what does this mean?

TAL. It means that I've made my own bargain—you can't call it an ugly one, can you? (SIR GEOFFRY *overcome*)

MID. (*almost unable to control his amusement*) Never mind, Champneys, it might have been worse. She's a proper sort, is Mary.

SIR G. Don't "Champneys" ME, sir. I'll—I'll turn him out!

MID. Well, he hasn't turned out *himself* quite as you fancied he would, eh? Ha! ha! ha! Who was right in his system *now*, eh? Ha! ha! ha! (*as he is laughing*, CHARLEY *heard*)

CHAR. (*without*, R.) My darling, I'll put the whole matter right in a moment.

Enter CHARLEY, *holding* VIOLET'S *hand*, C., *from* R.; *pause abruptly on seeing the others.*

MID. W-w-what's *this*, Charles Middlewick? Who is this you are——

CHAR. This, father, is *my wife*, or *will* be, when I have your consent.

MID. (*overcome with rage*) Why, you confounded——

SIR G. (*taking up same tone*) Insolent, presuming young upstart, why, I——

MID. (*in rage, to* SIR GEOFFRY) Don't bully my son, sir; don't bully my son—that's *my* department.

SIR G. Ha! ha! ha! Finely *your* system has succeeded, eh? Ha! ha! ha!

MID. We're insulted, defied, both of us. (*excitedly*) Turn your disobedient cub adrift if you've the courage to stick to your principles.

SIR G. And kick out your cad of a lad if your sentiments are not a snare and a delusion.

CHARLEY *and* VIOLET, TALBOT *and* MARY, *all in a state of suppressed excitement, have been earnestly talking in an undertone during the blustering row of the fathers.* CLARISSA *enters.*

MID. So I will, sir, so I will. Charles Middlewick, madam, that boy's no longer any son of mine. If you accept him you blight his prospects.

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CLAR. Mr. Middlewick, are you aware that Miss Melrose is——

SIR G. (*violently*) Don't you dare to interfere, madam.

VIO. I *have* accepted him, sir, and I will not blight his prospects.

MIDDLEWICK *overcome with rage.*

SIR G. (*to* TALBOT) And as for *you*, you impostor!

TAL. That'll do. I won't trouble you any longer. I'm off.

SIR G. Off, sir! where?

TAL. That's *my* business.

CHAR. (*taking* TALBOT'S *hand*) Yes, *our* business.

MID. Oh, yes—you can go with him if you please, and a good riddance.

SIR G. Go—go and starve.

TAL. *That* we can do without your permission, anyhow. You've kicked us out remember, father, because, being grown men, we've set our affections where our hearts have guided us—not your *heads*. And—and—Charley, finish it. I'm not an orator, and don't want to be.

CHAR. (*to girls*) We'll prove ourselves worthy of you by our own unaided exertions, and will *neither* of us ask you to redeem your promise till we've shown ourselves worthy of your esteem. We can get our living in London, and rely upon it *you'll* never hear of our distress should we suffer it.

CLAR. (*distressed*) Talbot, my dear nephew, you——

SIR G. (*violently*) Hold your tongue!

VIO. (*half crying; to the fathers*) You're a couple of hard-hearted monsters, and I don't know which I hate the most.

MARY. No—nor which is the uglier of the two.

CHARLEY *taking farewell of* VIOLET, *kisses her hand.* TALBOT *tries to get at* MARY; *intercepted by his Aunt.*

SIR G. (*aside; violently shaking* MIDDLEWICK'S *hand*) You've acted nobly, sir—you—you're a downright Roman father.

MID. (*reciprocating*) *You're another.*

The two old men shaking each other's hands violently but evidently overcome by mingled emotions. TALBOT *pushes his Aunt aside, and flings his arms round* MARY, *kissing her audibly;* CLARISSA *falls on to ottoman; on the movement of the scene,*

ACT DROP.

SECOND PICTURE.—CLARISSA *discovered fainting;* VIOLET *holding scent bottle to her nose.* MARY *at back waving handkerchief on terrace, off, r.;* SIR GEOFFRY *in easy-chair, overcome.* MIDDLEWICK, *with hands thrust deep into his pockets, standing doggedly.*

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ACT III.

SCENE.—*The third floor at* MRS. PATCHAM'S. *A very shabby sitting-room in a third-rate lodging-house. A door down,* L. H.; *a door,* C., *leading to landing; a door,* R. H., *up; fireplace and mantel-shelf,* L. *up; a shabby old arm-chair by fireplace; a table,* R. C., *on which are remains of breakfast—very common teapot with broken spout, a small stale remains of a loaf, two egg-cups, with the shells of eggs in them, brown sugar in a cup, etc.; small table, with penny bottle of ink, pens and paper; a few books up* R. H. *A tapping heard at the door, repeated, and then* BELINDA, *a slatternly lodging-house servant, puts her head in.*

BEL. Was you ringing? Please, was you a——(*enters, carrying an empty coal box*) Neither of 'em here. Bother them cinders, if I had my way with 'em I'd chuck 'em out of winder instead of having to carry 'em downstairs as careful as coals. Coals! Precious few of *them* the young gents has, and prices a rising dreadful. For they ARE gents, if they do buy only kitchen ones and has 'em in by the yunderd. What a fire! it's as pinched up as—— (*is about to give it a vigorous poke when she is restrained by the entrance of* TALBOT. *He is shabby, and a great contrast to his former showy self*)

TAL. (*sharply*) Now then!

BEL. (*turns with the poker in her hand*) Eh?

TAL. What are you going to do?

BEL. Only going to——

TAL. Of course. Strike a little fire like that, it's cowardly.

BEL. Shall I put some more coal on?

TAL. Certainly not.

BEL. You wouldn't let it go out?

TAL. Why not? It's a free country.

BEL. (*aside*) Sometimes I think they're both a little—(*touches her head*) It's too much study, that's what it is.

(*Sweeps up the hearth*)

TAL. (*aside*) Capital girl, this; simple and honest. A downright daughter of the soil, and carries her parentage in her countenance. Perhaps you had better put a pinch or two on. Mr. Middlewick will be in directly. (*she goes into room.*) He'll be cold, poor fellow, though, of course, he'll swear he isn't. I'm getting uneasy about Charley. Ever since I was seedy, and he sat up so much with me I've noticed a change in him; if he doesn't improve I shall—(*crash of coals heard*) There's a suspicious, not to say a shallow, sound about those coals. (BELINDA *enters with shovel of coals*)

BEL. I tell you what, sir, your coals are dreadful low.

TAL. Low! *Blackguardly, I* call them!

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BEL. I can easily order some more when I go to Loppit's!

TAL. Just so. Whether Loppit would see it in the same light's a question. There is already a trifling account which——

BEL. Oh, Loppit can wait.

TAL. He *can*—SHORT weight. By the way, I saw some boxes in the hall.

BEL. Yes, missus has gone out of town for a fortnight, and—— (*is about to put on the lot of coal*)

TAL. Gently—a bit at a time. (*takes up a piece with the tongs*) There—there—(*business*) I say, Belinda, if Loppit were to call his coals "not so dusty" it would be paying them a compliment, wouldn't it?

BEL. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you *are* a funny gent, you are.

As TALBOT *makes up the fire* CHARLEY *enters. He too is shabby, and looks worn. He carries some papers, and MSS.*

CHAR. Halloa! Talbot, old man, what are you doing now?

TAL. Giving Belinda a lesson in domestic economy—you know a severe winter always hardens the coal-merchant's heart!

CHAR. Yes, yes. (*takes off gloves and hat*)

TAL. And they're simply going up like—like——

CHAR. Smoke!

TAL. There! (*has done fire, stands before it, facing* CHARLEY; BELINDA *takes back shovel into room*) I consider I make a first-rate fire.

CHAR. Yes, you don't make a bad *screen*.

TAL. I beg your pardon. (*moves aside*)

CHAR. Don't mention it. The attitude and position are thoroughly insular and Britannic. It is a remarkable fact that an Englishman who never turns his back on the fire of an enemy invariably does it with his friends.

TAL. (*aside*) We've got our "sarcastic stop" on this morning, eh? Well, Charley, I suppose you did no good with Gripner?

CHAR. I had a highly interesting interview with that worthy publisher. I thought *you* thought that the poem I commenced at Cologne for amusement, had some stuff in it!

TAL. *Stuff!* Ha—*Full* of it.

CHAR. Exactly. Partial friends have declared I had a real vein of poetry, but Gripner—Ha! ha! *He*—well, he disguised his sentiments by assuring me poetry was a mere drug in the market. He'd also thrown his eye on those social sketches I'd thought were rather smart, but he said he

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knew at least fifty people who can roll out such things by the ream. However, he's given us a dozen pages a-piece for his new gazetteer. We begin in the middle of M—you can start at Mesopotamia, and work your way on at ten shillings a column. (*hands him papers*) It's bread and cheese!

TAL. I should think so. Ten shillings a column. (*unfolds papers; printed sheets*) By Jove, they *are* columns though. Regular Dukes of York. Penny a lining's coining compared to it. I can't say at the moment I know *much* about Mesopotamia, but——

CHAR. I remembered old Mother Patcham had a dilapidated gazetteer downstairs, so I borrowed it, and you can copy the actual facts.

TAL. Just so. Put it all in different language.

CHAR. Yes, the more indifferent the better.

TAL. Her book's about twenty years old; never mind—I'll double the population everywhere—that'll do it.

CHAR. Talking about population, I've had an interview with the agent for emigration to Buenos Ayres—he rather pooh-poohed us as emigrants. They don't want gentlemen.

TAL. We don't appear in particular request anywhere. It seems absurd to be hard-up in the Cattle Show week.

CHAR. Our governors are up in town, I'll swear.

TAL. Mine never missed the show for forty years. I can see him critically examining the over-fed monsters—punching the pigs and generally disturbing the last hours of the vaccine victims.

CHAR. Whom I envy. What a glorious condition is theirs—fed on the daintiest food—watched and waited on like princes—admired by grazing—I mean gazing crowds, and——

TAL. Eventually eaten, don't forget that. I'll go as far as the *sheep* with you, they *can* do what *we* can't.

CHAR. What's that?

TAL. Get a living out of their *pens*.

CHAR. Beginning to joke now. You're a changed being, Talbot.

TAL. Yes. Genuine "hard-upishness" is a fine stimulant to the imagination. The sensation of four healthy appetites a day, with——

CHAR. The power of only partially appeasing *two*——

TAL. Exactly—makes a fellow——

CHAR. *Thin*. Our cash is assuming infinitesimal proportions. Talbot. We must still further reduce our commissariat. I've been calculating, and I find that henceforth bacon at breakfast must be conspicuous by its absence.

TAL. Bacon—the word suggests philosophy, so with many thanks for past favours, "bye-bye, Bacon."

CHAR. When we first parted with our convertible

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property, we had hope in our hearts and cash in our money box. Now things don't look rosy we must bow to circumstances. "Tempora mutantur."

TAL. "Nos Et mutamur in illis."

CHAR. Which being loosely translated——

TAL. Means that we must give up the *Times* and take in the *Telegraph*.

CHAR. We've parted with a good many things, Talbot, but we've stuck to *one*—our word. We've never appealed to a relation.

TAL. Except, of course, a certain avuncular relative who——

CHAR. Shall be nameless. Just so—but our governors must have discovered by this time that our determination was no empty boast, and Violet and Mary have never heard a word from either of us. No one can say we've shewn the white feather.

TAL. One minute—I *must* clean my boots. (*takes up boots, and brings blacking-bottle from corner with a bit of stick in it, and boot brushes*)

CHAR. Why on earth do you always begin to——

TAL. (*blacking boot*) Always begin to clean my boots when you talk about Violet and Mary? Because I feel it's necessary at the mention of their names to work off my superabundant and irrepressible emotion. I feel if I don't have a go in at my boots, I shall do some awful—(*begins to brush violently*) Now go it!

CHAR. Do you know, Talbot, I could almost swear I saw Violet to-day?

TAL. You don't say so?

CHAR. And I *vow* I saw Mary.

TAL. Hah! (*brushing with tremendous violence*)

CHAR. I don't *think* they saw *me*, but——

TAL. (*at the boot*) What a *shine* there'll be in a moment!

CHAR. For I dodged behind a cab and——

Enter BELINDA, D. F.

TAL. And got away without——

BEL. (*brusquely*) What are you doing of? Drop them boots.

TAL. Belinda!

BEL. *I* clean the lodgers' boots. And it's my place to clean *yours*—if you are a third floorer. (*takes boot and brush from* TALBOT)

TAL. (*aside*) A third floorer!

CHAR. Belinda, don't talk as if you were reporting a prize fight.

(BELINDA *cleans boots*)

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TAL. And deal gently with the *heels*; they won't be trifled with.

CHAR. I've got a deuce of a headache, Talbot, and as I want a good afternoon's dig at the gazetteer, I'll go and lie down a bit in my den.

TAL. Do. I heard you walking up and down the room half the night; you're getting *ill!*

CHAR. Not a bit, old man, not a bit. (*goes towards door*) Nerves a little shakey, that's all—that's all.

(*Exit*, D. F.)

BEL. I tell you what—it's my opinion *you* wasn't half as ill as you'll soon have Mr. Middlesex!

TAL. Middle*wick*, Belinda. It's the natural obstinacy of your nature to call people out of their names. My name being Champneys, you call me Chimneys—*had* it been Chimneys you'd have had it Chimbley, of course. (*aside*) She's right, though. I'll go and ask Barnard to come round and see him. (*takes up hat*) I shall be in soon. By the way, those breakfast things are *not* an ornament—if, in a lucid interval, you should feel disposed to take them down stairs, I shall *not* feel offended. (*Exit*, D. F.)

BEL. He's a queer young gent, that; so are both of 'em. But, somehow, I've took to 'em—took to 'em *tremendous*. I wonder who they are. I'm sure they're *gentlemen* 'cos they can't do nothing for a living. Then they don't bully a poor lodging-house slavey. "Slavey"—that's what they call me, but, somehow, it don't seem rude like from *them*. Missis says they're "under a cloud," she thinks, and she's always in a regler fluster every Saturday till they've paid their rent. Ha, well, they knows their own business (*the door opens and* SIR GEOFFRY *enters, then* MIDDLEWICK. BELINDA *is placing the things on tray*) best, I suppose. Couldn't stand by and see him a blacking his——

SIR G. He-hem!

BELINDA *starts.*

MID. (*other side of her*) He-hem!

BEL. Bless us, who are *you?* (*retires up a little*)

The two old gentlemen look round the room with a rueful expression of countenance, then they look at each other blankly.

MID. Well!

SIR G. Well!

MID. A—here we are.

SIR G. Confound it, sir, don't talk like a clown.

MID. I won't. (*aside, miserably*) I don't feel like one. Pantaloon, and a worse treated one than ornery's more in my way a deal.

SIR G. Why—why it's a mere garret.

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MID. Where did you expect to find 'em? At Claridge's Hotel? or the Langham? Perhaps you hoped to see 'em driving mail *cecatons* in the Park, or a lolling out of a swell club winder in Pall Mall. Garret as you call it, *I* don't see as it's so oncomfortable.

SIR G. (*in broken voice*) I'm glad you think so, sir, I'm glad you think so.

MID. (*aside, in tone of pity*) Poor dear boy, to think he should have come to this!

SIR G. (*affecting harshness*) Not that I relent in any way. Oh, no, no.

MID. (*assuming same tone*) Nor I, nor I! As they make their beds so they must lie.

BEL. (*overhearing*) Bless your 'art, sir, they never make their own beds.

MID. He-hem! (*aside*) The servant. The very image of the gal as waited on me when I lived in a attic in Pulteney Street. It's my belief as nature keeps a mould for lodging-house servant gals and turns 'em out 'olesale like buttons. Sho's the identical same gal—same to a smudge. (*to her*) These young men here, are they pretty comfortable and all that?

BEL. (*aside*) Pumping! Who are they? (*to them*) Pretty well.

MID. Do they—do they *dine* at home?

BEL. No—they breakfusses!

SIR G. Oh, they breakfusses. Is that—or rather *was* that their breakfast?

BEL. Yes.

MID. (*aside; taking up egg*) Shop 'uns. Sixteen a shilling. *I* knows 'em. (*puts it down*) To think Charley should have to——(*breaks down*)

SIR G. (*through his glasses*) Good Heavens! what dreadful looking butter!

MID. (*faintly*) Dossit—my dear sir—inferior Dossit! (*aside*) *Precious* inferior.

SIR G. *Dorset*, man. *Dorset*.

MID. (*in rage*) Come here, I say, you know—you may be at home in all matters of *h*etiquette, and gene*h*allogy—and such like, but dammy, *do* let me know something of butter. I tell you that it's *Dossit—Dossit*—that's what it *is*—and what's more it's a two *h*ounce pat!

SIR G. (*stiffly*) On such a minute matter of professional detail I cannot, of course, attempt to argue. (*goes up*)

MID. (*aside*) Now that's all put on. Inside he's a suppressed *h*earthquake. He's a longing to throw his arms round his boy; but he wants me to give in first. (*talks aside to* BELINDA)

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SIR G. (*aside, up*) His rage is only a safety valve for his pent-up affection; poor fellow, he'd like me to propose a truce, but it's not for a man in my position to succumb to sentiment. I've only to wait, and his feelings, which are stronger—I may say *coarser* than mine, are sure to melt.

MID. (*to* BELINDA) And how's their appetites—pretty 'arty?

BEL. Fine. I often hear 'em telling one another what they've had for dinner, but when I see the way they devours their tea—do you know, I sometimes fancy——

MID. Yes?

BEL. As they've had no dinner at all.

MID. (*after slight pause, in a low voice*) No—no dinner at all. (*turns aside, and places his hand at his heart for a moment, shading his eyes with his other one*) Here—you seem a decent young woman—here's a half-sovereign—not a word. We're friends of *friends* of these young men. Speak out truthfully. Did you ever hear them speak of—of their relations?

SIR G. Yes, yes, *friends*, belongings—a—speak out!

BEL. Oh, yes, and more than once, by *accident*—for I ain't got time for listening—I heard 'em say they'd rather *starve* than write to 'em.

MID. (*overcome*) *Did* they—*did* they?

SIR G. (*proudly*) That was firmness—pride!

MID. From *your* point of view. Being a tradesman, *I* call it obstinacy.

SIR G. Fostered in *your* case by a system of absurd laxity.

MID. (*aside*) And that to the man as he called a Roman father!

BEL. But at one time—when one of 'em was taken ill——

SIR G. } What!
MID. }

SIR G. Ill! Ill, girl—not VERY ill?

MID. (*almost fiercely*) Which was it?

SIR G. Yes—speak, woman—which—not—not—theshorter one, the one with the light hair, who——

BEL. Yes, him.

SIR G. (*overcome; in broken voice*) But he—he *got better?*

BEL. Yes. Thanks to the other gent, who waited on him hand and foot, and never took his clothes off for a week, looking after his friend and attending to him for all the world as if he'd been his brother.

SIR GEOFFRY *goes to* MIDDLEWICK, *grasps his hand, with a sob aside.* MIDDLEWICK *silently returns the grasp, each holding head down.*

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MID. (*after pause; low voice*) And—and the other—who—who helped his sick friend so—so noble.

BEL. Well, it's *my* opinion he's in a worse way than the other, though he won't own it.

MID. (*very faintly, and in grief*) No—no—(*staggers slightly back.* SIR GEOFFRY *supports him*)

SIR G. (*gently, aside to* MIDDLEWICK) Come—come, old friend, be a man, (*giving way*) be a man as—as *I* am—don't give way. I'm firm—firmer than—than ever. (*blows his nose to hide his emotion*)

MID. What—what makes you fancy so?

BEL. Well, when he first come he was cheerful and happy, but bit by bit—as he got shabbier—he grew quieter like—and sometimes I've spoke to him three or four times afore he seemed to know I was a speaking, and——

MID. (*aside*) Poor boy! Poor boy!

SIR G. (*aside*) And *he* helped and nursed Talbot—I wish I'd come here sooner.

BEL. (*aside*) Who *can* they be? I don't like leaving 'em here, and all the lodgers' private papers about. There's a sort of County Court look about the short one. I've seen bailiffs enough in my time, and it ain't a bit unlikely as——

SIR G. Middlewick, something must be done. We—we mustn't *forget* ourselves and become *maudlin*, you know.

MID. (*pulling himself together*) No, no, certainly not.

SIR G. After all, we did everything for *them*, and they shewed a shameful return.

MID. (*convincing himself*) Yes, yes, so they did, so they did.

SIR G. Defied us.

MID. No mistake about it, and when you turned 'em out—

SIR G. *You* turned them out.

MID. You suggested it first.

SIR G. Well, well, they've eaten the leek.

MID. Ye-es, there ain't much nourishment in leeks, though I admit, *relishy*.

SIR G. I see you're giving way. (*sharply*) You're *thawing*.

MID. *Me* "thawring!" not *me*. But you was saying as something must be done, and I says ditto. Anonymous, of course.

SIR G. Quite so; permit *me* to arrange it. Young woman, there's something in your face thoroughly honest—the frequent contact with cinders, or whatever it may be, cannot conceal your innate truthfulness; your face is a picture, and I am old-fashioned enough not to object to a picture in a black frame. I prefer it.

BEL. (*aside*) Soft sawder. Something's a coming

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SIR G. In the first place, you mustn't say anything of our visit, and when the young men come in you must give them an envelope.

MID. Two—*two h*envelopes.

BEL. (*standing back*) Not if I know it. (*aside*) A summons, of course. (*to them*) I don't know neither of you gentlemen, but I wouldn't do nothing as would bring any harm to our third floorers for nothing as you could offer me. And, perhaps, you'll be good enough to take back your 'arf crown.

SIR G. (*aside*) Remarkable! But I never *could* understand the lower classes.

MID. (*aside*) If that 'arf sovereign doesn't blossom into a fi-pun note before the day's out my name ain't Middlewick.

SIR G. But whatever you do don't mention that—what's that? someone coming up the stairs?

BEL. Yes.

SIR G. We mustn't be seen.

MID. Not for the world. What's this? (*goes to door*, L.)

BEL. That's what the gents calls their *h*omnium gatherum —where they keeps——

SIR G. Is this Talbot's—I mean, Mr.——

BEL. Chimneys' room? yes, but you mustn't——

SIR GEOFFRY *bolts into door*, R. *as a tap is heard*, D. F., *and shuts door*. MIDDLEWICK *is peeping into room*, L., *when a tapping is heard and a loud* He-hem.

MID. Get us out of this without the lodgers seeing us and I'll—— (*bolts into room as door in flat slowly opens; he does not see who it is. Enter* MISS CLARISSA, *dressed in walking dress and carrying a reticule*)

CLAR. Young woman, are the gentlemen who lodge up here both out?

BEL. Yes'm. (*aside*) One is, and 'tother's a lying down and don't want worrying.

CLAR. Phew! (*sits; aside*) This is the servant, the young woman, Mr. Warrington, the detective, told me was "a good sort"—an odd phrase, but expressive. If I hadn't employed him the poor young men might have done something dreadful, with their pride and their sense of independence and all that.

BEL. Was you wanting to see either of 'em?

CLAR. Well, no, not just now. (*aside*) Geoffry, after discovering everything by shamefully intercepting one of Mr. Warrington's letters, thinks to frighten me with threats of even stopping my allowance and turning me out of his house if I communicate with Talbot. Bah! he's my own nephew, and he shan't starve whilst his Aunt Clarissa's got

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a penny in the world. His father may act like a brute, and so may Mr. Middlewick, but—ugh! *Cattle Show*, indeed. Coming to stare at a collection of adipose sheep, all sleep and suet; at islands of lean in oceans of obesity, called by courtsey cows; and a parcel of plethoric and apoplectic pigs, their own sons all the while wasting away to shadows. (*brings out fowl, ready trussed, from reticule*) Mrs. Patcham's out of town, isn't she?

BEL. Yes'm.

CLAR. Then there won't be any one in the kitchen?

BEL. Not a soul, 'cept me and the beetles.

CLAR. Very good. Your fire's in, of course?

BEL. Trust me. Missus and the fire ain't never out together.

CLAR. Very good—then follow *me*.

(*Exit*, D. F., *carrying the fowl; leaves bonnet on a chair*)

BEL. Here I say—(*goes to* D. F.) *She* don't mean no harm. She's a relation of one of the gents, *she* is. (*listens*) She skips down them kitchen stairs like a——(*a distant knock heard at front door*) These breakfast things 'll be here all day. Bother the knocker! (*takes up things on tray; a door slams*) Oh, Mrs. Radcliffe's opened the front door for me. A nice woman that. Always ready to save a poor girl's legs. Bless my 'art, I forgot all about them two parties in ambush. Well, they must wait until I——

Enter, D. F., VIOLET, *then* MARY.

VIO. This is the third floor, I believe. That very nice old lady who opened the door said that——(*both girls timid*)

MARY. Oh, if you please, is Mr. Champneys in?

VIO. Or Mr. Middlewick?

BEL. No, miss.

BOTH. How are they?

BEL. Well, really—a——

VIO. They are not ill—Mr. Middlewick is not *ill?*

BEL. No, miss.

VIO. (*aside to* MARY) Isn't it a dreadful place?

MARY. Poor dear Talbot!

VIO. Oh, Charley! (*to* BELINDA) Are they likely to be long?

BEL. Can't say.

MARY. Are the gentlemen out much?

BEL. Yes, miss.

VIO. Late?

BEL. Don't know. They both has latch keys.

VIO. Mary, we'll wait till they come in, and surprise them.

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MARY. If it's *proper*. (*to* BELINDA) I suppose they never have any visitors?

BEL. Well, as to *that*, you see ——

VIO. (*aside*) The girl seems confused. I almost wish I hadn't come. I always was of a suspicious nature. I can't help it. Mary believes in everybody, but I——(*noise in room*, R.) What's that?

BEL. N—nothing, miss—It's a printing machine next door. When it's at work it throbs like a regler *'edache*.

VIO. Who's room's that?

BEL. Mr. Middlesex's.

MARY. Middle*wick*. I've a very good mind to——(*moves towards door*. BELINDA *hastily jumps before it*)

BEL. You mustn't go there.

MARY. (*aside to* VIOLET) Do you see her alarm?

VIO. Am I blind?

MARY. No, but perhaps we both *have been*. (*screams at sight of bonnet on chair; in a low voice to* VIOLET) Look—look there!

VIO. (*in horror*) A human bonnet. Girl! (*seizes* BELINDA *by the arm*) Don't prevaricate. Speak the truth and I'll give you more money than you ever had in your life!

BEL. (*half crying*) I don't know what's a coming to everybody this blessed day—I wish missus would come back.

VIO. Who's is this?

BEL. A lady's, of course.

VIO. You hear, Mary.

MARY. (*tearfully*) Oh, don't speak to me!

BEL. But she's a nice sort of woman as ever lived and she says she's as fond of——

VIO. Of which?

BEL. Of *both* of them.

MARY. The wretch!

VIO. This is no place for us, Mary. (*noise heard, room*, L.) (*with a half scream*) That's not a printing machine.

MARY. I will see who—I mean *what's* in that room. Stand aside, girl.

BEL. 'Scuse me, that's the gents' private apartment—their *hominum* gatherum, and—

VIO. Come, Mary. We've been two fools, dear, and we——

As they go towards D. F., CHARLEY *and* TALBOT *enter; slight pause.*

TAL. Mary!

CHAR. Violet! Can I believe my eyes!

VIO. *I* can. AND my ears. So can Mary.

MARY. Implicitly.

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CHAR. But, Violet, this is so unexpected——

VIO. (*sarcastically*) Evidently.

CHAR. So—so bewildering. So inexplicable, and——

TAL. So jolly rum!

MARY. (*coldly*) Quite so.

CHAR. But how—how did you——

TAL. Did you find us out?

VIO. Never mind. Suffice it to say, Mr. Middlewick, that——

MARY. That we *have*——

VIO. "*Found you out.*" (*the girls curtsey; the men dumbfoundered*)

CHAR. You saw me in the street.

VIO. Probably. We were foolish enough to think you—we thought your silence proof of your truth—we deceived ourselves——

MARY. Don't, Violet! Where's your spirit? Let us leave them to their own consciences, if they *have* any. This is evidently a well-trained confederate. Henceforth we are strangers.

VIO. *Utter* strangers. (*they exit*, D. F.)

TAL. (*after slight pause*) What have you been saying to those ladies?

BEL. Nothink. But they called me a "coffederate." Now, a "coffederate's a man as knows the conjuror and says he doesn't," and I'm not a going to bear it. Look here, ladies, I—— (*Exit*, D. F.)

CHARLEY *and* TALBOT *look at each other.*

CHAR. This is some conspiracy. Somebody's been vilifying us—they shan't leave without one *word* of explanation, though. (*Exit*, D. F.)

TALBOT *goes to fire-place, his back to the door of the room where his father is.*

TAL. The girls don't mean it—can't mean it. Unless our determined silence has seemed suspicious, and—slightly altering the poet—suspicion ever haunts the *female* mind—always admitting there *is* such a thing as a female mind, which I'm beginning to doubt,——(*leans head on arm on mantel-piece*)

SIR GEOFFRY *opens door a little; it hides him from* TALBOT.

SIR G. (*to himself*) They've all gone. Not one syllable could I distinguish; but women's voices, and at high words, were only too evident. This comes of leaving two headstrong lads to the temptations of town. Oh, Talbot, I knew

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you were not a genius, but I did hope you would never forget you were a gentleman!

CHARLEY *re-enters quickly; as he does so* SIR GEOFFRY *steps back, nearly closing the door; the side of the room is set obliquely so that he is perfectly visible to audience, though unseen by those on the stage.* MIDDLEWICK *enters a little way.*

CHAR. Well, upon my life, they're a pretty pair.

MID. (*aside*) Ah, I was sure I heard two of 'em.

CHAR. (*flinging himself into a chair*) A couple of beauties, I *do* think.

MID. (*aside*) So do I. A nice noisy couple whoever they were. Pretty acquaintances for two young chaps as bragged of their fidelity!

TAL. Fact is they've got tired of waiting for us. They see we're poor—and are likely to keep so. What a confounded draft there is from that—(*goes to close door of his room,* R. H.; SIR GEOFFRY *advances;* MIDDLEWICK *enters further simultaneously; both indignant*)

MID. Sir Geoffry, you heard, of course.

SIR G. Not a word could I distinguish, for my hearing is utterly failing me. But you heard women's voices?

MID. Distinctly—even through the row of some confounded machine—a printer's, I fancy—next door.

SIR G. Though we could not distinguish a word your female friends said, some of *yours* reached us, and but too plainly indicated the familiar terms which—Oh, Talbot, I had hoped there would be still something of dignity and self-denial to qualify your absurdly Quixotic conduct, but I was mistaken. From your birth I mapped out your future, and hoped and prayed it should be a bright one, and now I find my son, my only child, who should have been my joy and pride, prove himself not only wilful and wrong-headed—I could have looked over *that*—but a *profligate*, and that, Talbot Champneys, I never *will* forgive.

CHAR. Don't speak, Talbot; let *me*. So, sirs, you have been playing the spy upon your sons.

MID. Don't exasperate me, Charles Middlewick, and no smug-faced shamming. We'd hunted you out, ready to forgive everything, but—a—there—I knew you were thoughtless, careless, *reckless* even, but I never dreamt you had a bit of vice in your whole nature.

CHAR. (*aside*) This is too much; the last straw breaks—

TAL. Who knows this is the last straw? After what I've heard recently I'm prepared for anything.

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CHAR. *You* are not the only people who have misjudged us.

TAL. No; others who were here but recently actually—

SIR G. Pray, sir, spare us the opinions of such persons. Talbot, I—I blush for you.

MID. There's no shame in you. You're worse than your companions who were here just now.

TAL. (*sharply*) What do you mean by that?

MID. Eh?

TAL. Ladies whom you will mention with respect, if you please. If we have been ill-treated by them it is not for you, no, sir, nor *you* (*to his father*) to speak slightingly of them *before us*.

SIR G. (*aside*) Brazening it out. To think that six months in this abominable city should have obliterated all sense of shame, all sense of self-respect. Oh, London, London, what a lengthy list of such sad cases lies at your debasing door!

CHAR. For my part, as regards Miss Melrose——

MID. Don't mention her. (*aside*) How dare he speak of that regler lady and true woman in the very teeth of such —bah!

CHAR. I am sorry to see you still bear a resentment in that quarter.

TAL. And as I should never care for any woman but Mary——

SIR G. (*indignantly*) You insult me by mentioning her name at such a time.

TAL. And as all is over between us——

SIR G. Ha! ha! I should think so. Eh, Middlewick?

MID. Depend upon it, the cousins know *all*.

SIR G. Ay, ay, trust a woman for finding out all she wants, and sometimes a deuced deal more. *This* accounts for their suddenly departing for the Continent last week.

MID. Of course; where no doubt they're endeavouring to dispel their sorrow.

SIR G. Just so. In the vortex of Parisian society.

MID. Strolling up and down the bully-vards and the bore de boolong. Shewing them saller-faced foreigners what good, 'olesome looking English gals are.

SIR G. Yes, yes. (*warming*) I can see them.

MID. (*working it up*) So can I.

SIR G. The dear creatures! That puss, Mary, has quite wound herself round my heart. An artful, winning little beauty.

MID. And as for the 'aughty one, we've got that friends I wouldn't see her wronged or insulted for—Ugh!

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SIR G. Aah! (*with exclamations of disgust, they go up*)

CHARLEY *and* TALBOT *gaze blankly at each other, both stupefied.*

TAL. Charley, does your father drink?

CHAR. No. Is lunacy hereditary in your family?

TAL. Never heard of it. I say, football's a capital game, for the *feet*. But the ball has a somewhat invidious and one-sided sort of place of it, hasn't he? I don't care for any more abuse.

CHAR. Nor I. (*to the fathers*) As we appear by some unfortunate means of which we know nothing to have grievously offended everybody, explanations are, of course, impossible. (*with solemnity and decision*) But as—before such an undertaking as—

TAL. Hear! hear! Such an undertaking as we are about to—in short, to undertake.

CHAR. Quiet and uninterrupted companionship is desirable in order to finally settle our plans regarding emigration. (*both the fathers start*)

TAL. Just so. And *you*, having once turned us out, must not feel surprised if we——(*shrugs his shoulders, and hands* SIR GEOFFRY *his hat*)

MID. Em—emigration!

SIR G. Are you mad, sir? Do you know the time of the year—winter?

MID. Why, confound it, Charley—I mean, *Charles*—you're not going to leave me—to leave England, I mean? What are you both dreaming of?

TAL. Nothing *now*; we've woke up.

SIR G. And where would you——

CHAR. Queensland, or else, perhaps——

MID. Charley, I can't bear this; you're a driving me desprit. If—if you go you'll—you'll *break my heart!* Dammy, I can't play the Roman father no longer! (*sinks into a chair, up, L.*)

SIR G. (*aside*) He's given in—I knew he would. If he *hadn't, I must* have done, and it's best as it is. He-hem! We have been—a—*hasty*—perhaps, when we were concealed in those rooms—a— (*breaks down*) Talbot—Talbot—(TALBOT *looks at him—he immediately becomes frigid*) In *my* case much is at stake. You are my *son*—my heir— (*with severity*) I—I *command* you to give up this mad notion. (*he is standing in a proud and authoritative attitude—a contrast to* MIDDLEWICK, *who is sitting crushed and tearful*)

MID. Charley—I—I—*implore* YOU! (*slight pause on picture; the young men, C.*

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TAL. (*coldly*) I regret my inability to obey you.

CHAR. (*same tone*) Talbot has replied for both.

SIR G. (*almost overcome*) And this—*this* is the result of our much vaunted systems. Even a rod of iron will——

VIOLET *and* MARY *have entered.*

VIO. (*down,* R.) Will *rust,* Sir Geoffry.

MARY. (*down,* L.) And the truest steel may fail you when most you may rely on it.

VIO. Oh, Charley, forgive me—we know *all* now.

MARY. And we're *so* ashamed of ourselves!

(*The young couples talk eagerly*)

SIR G. (*looks amazed; to girls*) Why—why aren't you on the Continent?

MARY. Why aren't you at the Cattle Show?

VIO. (*to* CHARLEY) I never imagined you saw me in the street.

MID. Here, what's this? Why ain't you abroad? Yes, abroad. (*to* SIR GEOFFRY) I'll be hanged if *we* ain't.

VIO. Fancy the two old gentlemen hiding themselves so absurdly, and our having such horrible——

MARY. But highly *natural*——

TAL. No, no, *un*-natural——

MARY. Suspicions.

MID. We can't have been, and yet they seem to be. Ha! ha! (*gives a violent start on seeing* CLARISSA'S *bonnet*)

TAL. Upon my life, Charley, that jolly old firework, your father, ought to be *put out.*

MID. What's that, eh?

SIR G. (*seizing it*) Yes! No LADY was ever seen in such a monstrosity as *that.* Combining as it does the concentrated incongruity of Covent Garden Market with the accumulated imbecility of the Burlington Arcade.

The girls look surprised at the young men, who can't explain.

VIO. It *is* a bonnet.

MARY. And a hideous one.

MID. The question is, whose is it?

Enter CLARISSA, D. F.

CLAR. Mine, if you please—don't crush it. (*comes down, takes it*)

GIRLS. Miss Champneys!

TAL. Aunt!

SIR G. (*severe again*) So, Clarissa—madam, you not only come up to town against my express commands—but—but in an article of attire which is simply——

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MID. *Loud*—oh, yes, you're a highly sensible woman, but it *is* loud.

CLAR. That's *your* opinion. *I* paid Mr. Warrington to discover my nephew, and notwithstanding your threats, Geoffry, I preferred to brave your anger rather than share your regret, when you had perhaps found your son—the victim of a severe father's system—either in the streets or gone Heaven knows where. My dear nephew—Mr. Middlewick, (*shakes hands*) I've heard how you behaved to him. But you're two scarecrows. I've got a fowl at the kitchen fire, and as it's only enough for two, we'll all go round to luncheon at Sir Geoffry's hotel, whilst *you*—

MID. Polish off the poultry. Brayvo!

SIR G. (*severely*) *What*, sir?

MID. It's no good, don't look severe, Sir Geoffry. (*goes to him*) It don't suit you.

SIR G. (*chafing*) But my own sister—a Champneys, cooking a fowl in a lodging-house kitchen, and I'm positively certain *spoiling* it—defying my authority and—

VIO. (*has slipped her arm through his*) Sir Geoffry, *dear* Sir Geoffry, don't you think we've *all* been a little wrong?

SIR G. (*pleased*) Eh?

VIO. *You*, especially?

SIR G. (*huffed*) He-hem!

VIO. And that we all ought to beg each other's pardons?

MARY. (*other side*) Yes, dear Sir Geoffry, and promise to forget the past, and never do so any more?

VIO. Eh, Sir Geoffry? (*squeezing his arm*)

MARY. Eh, dear Sir *Geff.*? (*same business*)

SIR G. (*pleased, and unable to deny it*) Ha! ha! Sir *Geff.* indeed! (*looks at each admiringly*) You're a couple of syrens. I feel you would make me forgive *anything*—except that bonnet.

CHAR. I must own it staggered *me*. I knew it couldn't be Belinda's.

BOTH GIRLS. (*drop* SIR GEOFFRY'S *arm*) Who's Belinda?

TAL. Ha! ha! A slave.

SIR G. What?

TAL. Slave of the *ring*—comes when you pull the *bell*, you know. (*enter* BELINDA) One of the best girls in England, and the best nurse in the universe, as *I* well know.

BEL. That fowl's a frizzling itself to regler fiddle-strings. Why, everybody seems to know everybody else.

MID. (*beckons her to him*) Here. Have you—have you got a young man? A sweetheart, you know?

BEL. A young man! He! he! And me two-and-twenty!

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MID. Just so. What *is* he? I mean, what's his business? How does he get his living?

BEL. He's a butterman.

MID. *Is* he though? Tell him to call round to-morrow at that address, and I'll buy him the best business in the Boro'. (BELINDA *goes up dazed*) Sir Geoffry, they're our own again—our boys.

SIR G. No, no, somebody else's. (*points to the young couples spooning*)

CLARISSA *is explaining to* BELINDA.

MID. All in good time. (*laughing*) *You* and your rod of iron, bless your 'art, it wasn't a bar of soap.

SIR G. (*shaking hands*) Ha! ha! I'm afraid so, and *you*—*you* a father of ancient Rome! Ha! ha! *Greece* is more in *your* line.

VIO. (*to* CHARLEY) Yes, yes, Charley, I know I was blind to my own shortcomings, and was haughty, headstrong, and capricious, whilst *you*, Mary——

MARY. I don't think I've been anything in particular, and if I *have* I'm not going to admit it.

TAL. Quite right, Mary, nothing like being thoroughly satisfied with *yourself*, unless it's being MORE than satisfied with ME.

SIR G. Clarissa, I was foolish just now. I beg your pardon. Talbot, dear boy—(*shakes hands*) Charles—(*shakes hands*) I—I see my error.

MID. Ha! ha!

SIR G. (*stiffly and abruptly at him*) And other people's. (*aside*) I'm so happy I—but I *musn't admit it*—a—YET. (*to them*) We haven't understood each other, borne with each other, we haven't shewn sufficient of the glorious old principle of "Give and take." Sister, boys and girls, old friend, (*to* MIDDLEWICK) hot tempers, hasty judgments, extreme crotchets, thick-skinned prejudice, theory and rule run rampant, ignoring the imperfections of poor human nature—these, henceforth, we throw overboard and rise to brighter realms, even as the aspiring aëronaut flings away his heavy ballast and floats serenely through the cloudless sky.

Melody in Orchestra swells as

CURTAIN FALLS ON PICTURE.

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Partners for life

[illegible]

by H. S. Byron

Dra. Personae

Darbyshire

Earnest — Nephew of Mercoyn

Mercoyn — [illegible] [illegible]

Major [illegible] [illegible]

Muggles — an old [illegible] (Horace)

Sir Archibald Drelincourt

Tom Gilroy — Barrister

Emily Mercoyn

Priscilla, do — an old maid [illegible] youthful manner

Miss Smith [Fanny] = Emily's friend

Four pages 1810

See after page 48

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MERV. Well, well, well, really I—

TOM (*up* R C). I can't pass my entire time here in keeping my eye on Muggles. Besides my other eye might object to it, and revenge itself with a chronic squint; turn against the other in fact; sort of optical 'King's evidence.' The small spite of some discharged servant, no doubt; but I'll *try* my eye on Muggles, notwithstanding. It has had its effect at sessions before *now*, and Muggles may be a scoundrel. Why shouldn't he be? Most people are. (*Looks at* MUGGLES *with a searching glance.*)

MUG. (*in an undertone, almost fiercely, to* MERVYN). I say I've given myword and if you *don't* buy the oss, I shall look like a—a—(*Sees* TOM *surveying him coolly—he quails—tries to continue—breaks down, and slinks off door* L 2 E.)

TOM (*aside*). Yes, my anonymous friend, I *will* keep my eye on Muggles.

Enter SERVANT, *door* L 2 E.

SERV. (*announces*). Sir Archibald Drelincourt and Major Billiter.

Enter SIR ARCHIBALD *and the* MAJOR, *door* L 2 E.—*Exit* SERVANT—*General hand-shaking, and introduction of* TOM—*Then exit* MERVYN, *door* L 2 E.

ERNEST (*down* R C, *aside maliciously to* EMILY). *Now* you'll be happy.

EMILY (*on sofa* R., *in the same tone*). Oh, I've *been* so ever since dear Tom came.

ERNEST (*scarcely able to contain his annoyance*). *I* shall go and meet Fanny Smith, she's sure to drive the pony carriage down Ridley's Lane.

EMILY. Do, and give my love to her.

ERNEST (*goes up* C, *annoyed.*)

EMILY (*rising and going up to him*). And Ernest!—

ERNEST (*turns quickly*). Yes—(MAJOR BILLITER *goes and sits on sofa with* PRISCILLA.)

EMILY (*up* L C). And your *own* too, if you like.

ERNEST (*scarcely able to master himself*). If you were a *man* I'd talk to you.

EMILY. And if *you* were one, I'd talk to *you!*

ERNEST. Ah! (*Dashes out* C *and* R.)

EMILY. If I didn't like him so much, I'm sure I should hate him. (*Exit door* L 2 E).

DRELIN. (*coming forward* L C *with* TOM). Oh, yes, Mr Gilroy I shall count on your co-operation. You legal gentlemen have a knack of placing matters invitingly before a miscellan-

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eous audience, and at our meeting you must take the chair —no, pardon me, you *must*.

TOM (c). Oh, I'll take everthing you please. But I must confess the object of the society seems a little foggy.

DRELIN. Foggy! my dear, sir. What! populating a territory in Africa which absurd prejudice has declared unhealthy, simply because—

TOM. Simply because everybody dies who goes there.

DRELIN. Everybody dies who goes everywhere.

TOM. Unless they come back.

DRELIN. We've a surplus population—good—get rid of the surplus population. Send it out wholesale to the banks of the Bangalora river. The idea prevalent here is that it's unhealthy.

TOM. Excuse me. Fatal.

DRELIN. Just so. Then my reply is *Pooh!* That's my reply, sir—'Pooh!

TOM. Concise, but scarcely convincing.

DRELIN. I have a black servant with me, who was *born* on the banks of the Bangalora river; was reared on the banks of the Bangalora river; thrived there; brought up a large family there; always had his health there. Now mark me—That rash negro *leaves* the banks of the Bangalora river, and seeks those of the Thames, which, the season being winter, and severe—is partially frozen over. What is the result? (*Severely*). That man catches a severe cold on his lungs—he regrets having left his home—he pines—he sinks—and he costs me a pretty doctor's bill. Now Mr Gilroy, I say that facts are stubborn things, and my expiring black servant says, he considers *Bangalora* healthier than *England*, and as he was *born* there, I think he ought to know.

PRISC. Poor creature, I should like to send him some arrow-root or sago, or something.

TOM. Certainly your anecdote goes to support your theory.

DRELIN. Theory. *Call* it theory if you like, I *believe* in theory.

TOM. I'm a lawyer, and prefer *practice*.

MAJOR (*who has been talking to* PRISCILLA *on sofa* R.) By Jove, ma'am, I could have cut him down, the scoundrel! A low toll-keeper to tell me I'd given him a bad sixpence. If I'd had my sabre, I'd have cut him down. (*Rises and goes with* PRISCILLA *on terrace* C.)

DRELIN. It's all very well to pooh-pooh these charitable efforts, but I confess I am always thinking of the good of my neighbours.

TOM. For *my* part, from what I know of the good of my neighbours, I confess I *don't* think much of it. I see, Sir Archibald, your philanthropy likes to look a long way off; *anybody* can see after these poor creatures next door

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DRELIN. Just so. I see you understand me.

TOM. Perfectly. Sort of telescopic charity yours, eh. Distance lends enchantment to the view, and that being your view you reciprocate the sentiment by only lending to the *distance*, ha! ha!

DRELIN. Ha! ha! Yes, yes. (*They go up* L C, *laughing and talking.*)

PRISC. (*up* C). Major, doesn't he talk beautifully?

MAJOR (*up* R C). Hang it, ma'am, he's a Barrister; spouting's his trade. He's paid for it.

PRISC. Just as you were for killing people.

MAJOR. Ha! ha! Just so, and by Jove ma'am, I earned my money like a man.

PRISC. Ah, Major, you're a terrible person.

MAJOR. So the enemy thought, ma'am, I assure you. (*They come forward* R.)

Enter MERVYN *and* EMILY, *door* L 2 E.

MERV. (L C). Now, Tom, you needn't bother about putting yourself into evening clothes to-day. We're primitive people here, and are consequently polite, no such complete gentleman as your thorough savage—eh, Drelincourt. Ha! ha!—So we've ordered dinner early, thinking you'd be hungry and tired after your journey. (*Looks at his watch*). Jove it's past the time. (*Laughter heard off* R U E). Ha! *that's* our fair guest, I'll swear to the ring of that laugh.

PRISC. (*down* R. *aside*). So will I—a designing minx.

Enter MISS SMITH *on* ERNEST'S *arm*, C *from* R, *they are laughing and talking.*

FANNY (*coming down* C). Oh, how absurd you are, Ernest, how very absurd.

EMILY (L, *aside*). Calls him *Ernest* already. I wish I'd never asked her here.

FANNY. I never enjoyed a drive so much in my life—how those ponies *can* go when they choose, and I *made* them *I* can tell you. Didn't I Ernest?

ERNEST (*up* R C). You *did*. You managed them like a—like a—

FANNY. Like 'anything.' Ha! ha! *that's* the simile for *me*—means nothing, and everyone understands it. (*Crosses to* L C). Why Emily, dear, what's the matter—you look about as cheerful as—what *is* the matter?

EMILY (*petulantly turning away*). Nothing! what *should* be?

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FANNY (*with an expressive raising of the eyebrows*). I *hope* I've not kept the banquet waiting—my watch is so deceptive.

MERV. (C, *to her with old-fashioned gallantry*). The watch that could deceive *you must*—

FANNY (*laughing*). Oh, there, don't pay me any more compliments—flattery runs in the family—Ernest there's been talking the most dreadfully poetical admiration all the way from the gate.

EMILY (*in a great passion which she can scarcely control at* ERNEST). Has he indeed! (*Aside*). I don't know which I hate the most.

MERV. By the way, I must introduce you to my cousin, he's come down for a day or so. Capital company, talk for ever, and then begin again. Here my boy. (TOM *comes down* R C). Miss Smith permit me to introduce my cousin, Mr Gilroy.

FANNY *has been talking to* EMILY, L.—*Turns, recognises* TOM *and starts.—He also starts apparently overwhelmed with surprise.—Their movements are observed by* PRISCILLA.

FANNY (*aside*). Tom!

TOM (*aside*). Fanny, by Jove!

Enter MUGGLES, *door* L 2 E.

MUG. (*up at door*). Dinner is served.

MERV. (*up* L C *to* FANNY). Permit me. (*Offers her his arm, she takes it mechanically.—They exit door* L 2 E.)

PRISC. (R, *aside*). They know each other. I was certain she was a 'madam.' But dear Tom shall not be victimized, I will hover round him like a butterfly, and protect him.

ERNEST (*comes forward, offers* EMILY *his arm*).

EMILY. Certainly *not*. Thank you, Major. (*Takes the* MAJOR'S *arm—They exit door* L 2 E.)

ERNEST (*seizes* DRELINCOURT *by the arm, and drags him off*.

TOM (*stands* R C, *in a state of bewilderment*.)

PRISC. (*sidles up to him*.)

TOM (*aside*). It can't *be*! Fanny! *my wife here!*

PRISC. (*trying to attract his attention*). He-hem!

TOM (*aside*). What's the meaning of it?

PRISC. (*nudging his elbow*). He-hem! Cousin Thomas. (*He is absorbed in thought, and takes no notice*). Dear Thomas. (*Vexed*). It seems I must go in to dinner by myself then. (*Crossing to door* L.)

MUG. Allow me. (*Offers his arm—She looks at him indignantly, and exit.*)

TOM (*sinks bewildered on Ottoman.*—MUGGLES *watching him as*

ACT DROP DESCENDS RATHER SLOWLY.

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ACT II.

SCENE, *the same as 1st Act.*

Enter MERVYN *and* TOM *from door* L 2 E.

MERV. (*up* R C). Well, now, honestly Tom—honestly now—what do you think of her?

TOM. Of her? Of whom?

MERV. Bah! Who *should* I mean but Miss Smith. Fanny—our visitor, Emily's old schoolfellow.

TOM (L C). There can't be two opinions about *her*.

MERV. Certainly not; quite right. Isn't she what you'd call rather a—rather a—

TOM (*stolidly*). Oh, very much so.

MERV. Hang your cold style of agreeing with a man. I give you some of my very best claret, and the more you absorb, the chillier you become. You lawyer fellows lead such ascetic selfish lives in your rusty old chambers tha there's no rousing you. Living alone's a mistake, sir, and I'm beginning to find it out.

TOM. Well, *you* don't live alone. You can't count Priscilla and Emily as nothing. Then Ernest spends his vacations here, and you seem to keep open house for your neighbours. What more do you want?

MERV. Sympathy—congenial companionship. Ernest and Emily have their own tastes and fancies to follow, and they're not mine. Priscilla—well Priscilla is—

TOM. Lively company, I'm sure.

MERV. *Too* lively Tom; her friskiness increases with her years. She's as good as gold, and adores me; but a sister's adoration may occasionally lapse into boredom. (*Comes forward*, R C.)

TOM. Ha, how is it you never married years ago?

MERV. (*starting violently—evidently agitated*). What! Eh! What do you mean by that?

TOM. What I say.

MERV. *Mind* what you say, Tom. You barristers have a way of blurting out remarks that—tha! (*Aside*). What the devil am I saying?

TOM. What a remarkable explosion about nothing at all. (*Throws away cigarette, and comes forward* L.)

MERV. As I was saying, when you interrupted me—my life's dull and colourless. (*Sits on ottoman* C). Now, Tom, we're old friends—very old friends—you've been a wild dog, and your uncle Bernard knew it. To prevent you ever making a foolish marriage, you know he left your matrimonial fate in my hands, and you can never marry without my

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express sanction. If you do, you'll forfeit your
And I'm an inexorable dog. Ha! ha!

TOM (*sitting on ottoman*). Uncle Bernard was a old bachelor, and as such should be pitied, if not de.

MERV. (*quickly*). That's what *I* say; a man shouk Even—even if the act should cause him any serious venience, loss or—or—

TOM (*quickly*). Just so; my sentiments *exactly*.

MERV. Now, though you've been a slap-dash sort of chap, I think highly of your opinion, matured as it has been by experience and knowledge of the world.

TOM. Yes, I've seen a little.

MERV. Just so; and the last thing you've seen—the most recent fact you've noticed—eh. (*Playfully tapping him in the chest, then sitting back to watch the effect of his words.*)

TOM (*reflectively*). Well—a—really I can't say—I exactly—

MERV. I observed your eye at dinner; you can't deceive *me*; you never took it off her. You ate nothing—you drank a good deal—the more you took, the more stolid you became—you were *glum*, actually glum. Major Billiter who's next door but one to a chimpanzee at conversation as a *rule* shone like a Theodore Hook beside you. Tom, you—you have guessed my secret. (*Turning aside half bashfully.*)

TOM (*aside*). I wonder if he's often like this.

MERV. I admit it—I'm not ashamed of it. Thomas, I love her!

TOM. What!

MERV. I love Fanny Smith, as I don't believe any man loved before. (*Rises, takes* R.)

TOM. Phew! (*Sits back.*)

MERV. (R C). It's not surprising, is it?

TOM. A—a little startling at the moment.

MERV. Don't you admire her?

TOM. Immensely.

MERV. Isn't she accomplished?

TOM. Plays and sings, draws and rides, can act charades, and waltz better than any woman in England. (*Rises, takes* L.)

MERV. (*astonished*). How do you know that?

TOM (*a little confused*). Well, I should *fancy* she could She's a sort of Admirable-Crichtonish appearance, as if she could do anything—(*aside*)—except keep her temper.

MERV. You've hit it exactly. She's simply perfection, and, come now, don't you think she'd make me a delightful wife?

TOM. Well—a—(*Aside*) I've gone through a good deal in my day, but this is a *capper* to a career of surprises, and *no* mistake.

MERV. Can you—even *you*, you supercilious rascal you—come, can you find a single objection to her?

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TOM. Only one.

MERV. Let's have it, sir, ha! ha! let's have it.

TOM. Well, she's too young.

MERV. Oh, but she'll grow older.

TOM. Yes, so'll *you*.

MERV. (*irritated*). I'm aware of it, sir, I'm aware of it—It requires no ghost from Brick Court Temple, to tell us *that*.

TOM. Why, you're old enough to be her father,—very *much* her father.

MERV. Whosaid I wasn't, sir? I'm not ashamed of my age.

TOM. No; but *she* might be.

MERV. Never mind, sir. Better be an old man's darling, than a young man's slave.

TOM. Very good argument for the old man. I'd sooner be the slave owner myself.

MERV. How can a young woman feel any respect for a stripling only about her own age—or at the best a half a dozen years or so older? It's these lads who rush into matrimony so young, who find their mistake out, and suffer for it. Now a man at *my* time of life knows his own mind, and—

TOM. Excuse me, doesn't the argument also apply to the woman? If it *does*, your wife should be a mature lady, who—

MERV. (*in a rage*). I won't *have* a mature lady; I don't *admire* mature ladies, I like youth, beauty, freshness, girlish innocence, grace, artlessness—damme, sir, don't dictate to *me* about whom I should marry.

TOM. Why not; You've the power to dictate to *me*. That stupid will—

MERV. Hang it, sir, marry who you like.

TOM (*quickly*). Do you mean that?

MERV. Anybody in the world, sir, except—(*Recovering his good humour*). Ha! ha! Fanny Smith, my boy. Come, come, don't look so blank. *You* think I ought to marry an old woman, and I prefer to marry a *young* one. Ha! ha! that's all. May the difference of a partner never alter cousinship. Ha! ha! ha! (*Shakes hands very cordially with* TOM, *and exit* C *and* L.)

TOM. In addition to keeping my eye on Muggles, I now have to keep my eye on Mervyn—to say nothing of Fanny, that's three people to two eyes. There's *one* thing certain, he can't marry her. Bigamy's beyond even *her* bold spirit. (*With some feeling*). Besides she can't *quite* have forgotten everything. It's not so *very* long since after all. (*Sighs*). Hah! I wish I could see the conclusion of this case. (*Exit* R *door—as he does so*)

Enter MUGGLES *slowly, door* L 2 E, *having been watching, and* MERVYN C *from* L—*they meet.*

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MERV. (*down* R C). Ha, Muggles, you there?

MUG. (L C). The ladies is *h*enjoying of the *h*air, and the Major's a snoring 'ard in the *h*easy chair. As I heer a party with black ringlets and a 'orse pistol say once at the Surry, 'Ha! ha! we *h*ar *h*alone.'

MERV. Muggles!

MUG. The viper have glided off.

MERV. Viper! Muggles.

MUG. By which term I *denomiate*, T. Gilroy, Esquire, Barrister at Lor.

MERV. What do you mean?

MUG. You must get rid on him. He won't do here; he's artful and designing, and he'll get round you; and I aint a-going to permit nobody to get round you, whilst *I'm* by.

MERV. Really I—

MUG. It's no good your trying to conceal nothing from *me*. You're *smit*, that's what *you* are.

MERV. Smit!

MUG. Cupid's taken a *h*aim at your 'art and he's *'it* it. You was always of a susceptible nature, nobody knows that better than *me*. Eh, guv'nor? recollect when we—

MERV. (*in an agony of fear*). Hush! hush!

MUG. Ha, them *was* days 'when,' as the poet has it.

Sings lugubriously.

When we was boys,
Jolly, jolly boys,
When we was boys—

MERV. (*in great perturbation*). Oh, hush, pray!

MUG. (*under his breath*). 'Together.'

MERV. How can you continually torture me by referring to events of long ago? Why don't you relieve meof your presence? I'll settle anything in reason on you, as I've often told you. You might set up in business, and be independent in no time.

MUG. Ha, take a public 'ouse. They're obliged to be kep' too respectable now-a-days to soot *me*. Your modern licensed wittler seems to me to pass his time in shuttin' up and gettin' fined. No; I prefer servitoode. By going away I might become *my own* master, but in remaining—

MERV. You continue *mine*. Is that it?

MUG. That's an onpleasant way of puttin' it, but we won't split *'airs*. Now, you can't gammon a faithful old servant—this here Mr Gilroy's fell in love with Miss *Hess*.

MERV. What!

MUG. And you've *h*observed it.

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MERV. Certainly not—I saw nothing of the sort.

MUG. Sorry for it. The mole is *not* a domestic *h*animal, and it's *h*unwise to *h*imitate him in the family *succle*. You aint blind nat'rally. *I* watched my friend, and his symptoms is 'spoons.'

MERV. (*getting interested*). No, Muggles; do you really think so? (*Aside*). Why not? She'd fascinate anybody. (*To* MUG.) What proof have you that—

MUG. As a rule, I don't know a more commanding twist than that Mr Gilroy have. But to-day! and after a journey too. Soup sent away untouched—fish *ditter*—hontrays *do*.—I suspected him over the first course, but when he actually come to refusing of his *salary*—the temptingest thing as *is*—says I, 'Thomas Gilroy,' says I, 'you're over 'ed and ears in love with that young woman,' says I, 'and all the deeper cos it's sudden and hinstantaneous.'

MERV. Now you mention it, certainly every time I looked at him, *he*—

MUG. Was a looking at *'er*. Why he *yung* upon her every syllable. *She* too see the impression she made, and—

MERV. (*fidgetty*). No, no; do you really think so?

MUG. Do you suppose every woman don't know when she's landed another wictim? Whenever she looked at him it was with a kind of '*I don't see you*' glance as maddened him, for he bit at his bread quite *furous* once or twice, and kicked old Billiter en the shin by accident on purpose, and never begged his pardon. They'll make a match of it, them two.

MERV. (*in a rage*). Never! Ha, ha! I've got my young friend *there* anyhow. If he marries without my leave he's a pauper.

MUG. Bosh.

MERV. (*turning indignantly*). What, sir!

MUG. Not 'aving any other *h*observation 'andy, I can only repeat, '*Bosh*.'

MERV. You should be more careful in your remarks.

MUG. So should *you*. What's money to a man like 'im? Aint he making his way at the bar? Don't he write *h*articles in the noospapers and *maggerzines*? Yes, and gets paid for 'em too. Besides she herself aint—

MERV. (*softened*). True, true. I beg your pardon, Muggles. I was carried away by my temper. But what can I do?

MUG. Make him marry Miss *H*emily, or else kick 'im *h*out. There you are. There's Muggle's sentiments in a nutshell.

MERV. What! eh?

MUG. Verb—sap—a nod's as good as a wink to a blind 'oss. Somebody's a coming, so I dror in my yorns. If he marries *one*, he can't marry *tother*—*he* ain't likely to run the risk of big—a———

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MERV. (*furiously, starting*). Silence, man! A subject like *that*, you know, is one which—which———

MUG. *Just* so. (*Aside*). It's all right; I've set the train all reg'lar, and the blow *h*up in the Miller and his Men was a *h*innocent flash compared to the 'bust' as is looming in the *future*. (*Exit door* L 2 E).

MERV. (*alone*). He's right—the scoundrel always is right. I was a fool to ask Tom down whilst *she* was here—I can't pack him off. *She* doesn't seem inclined to go, and if she did I couldn't let her. (*Crosses to* L). *Ernest's* fond of Emily. Pooh! a boy ought to be at school still. It's a bold notion—all that vagabond's are. I—

Enter TOM *and* EMILY *door* R 2 E.

EMILY (*comes* C). Come, Tom, you *were* smitten with her—own it now, like a man. (*Places a flower in* TOM'S *buttonhole*).

TOM (L C). Well, have it your own way. Convincing arguments with a pretty girl are like *facts* with a Welsh jury, they rather tell against you.

EMILY. Her manners *are* very fascinating at first.

Enter PRISCILLA, *door* R 2 E.

TOM. Don't the fascination last, then? Does it wear out like electro gilt, and discover the sham foundation, eh?

PRIS. (L C). Some kind of gilt never wears out.

TOM. Ha, that's when one adds *u* to it.

MERV. (*up* L C). Ha, ha, ha!

EMILY. Ha, ha, ha!

PRIS. (*highly annoyed*). I don't see anything humorous about it *myself*. The way Miss Smith goes on is simply offensive. She's got hold of Ernest, and is actually inducing him to *swing* her.

EMILY. It's monstrous! shameful!

PRIS. It's really glaring!

They go up and look off C *and* R.

TOM. Yes, and it's so soon after dinner.

MERV. (*aside*). I'll do it—I'll strike whilst the iron's hot. I can but fail. Hem. (*Comes forward* L C). Tom.

TOM (C). Yes.

MERV. (*indicating* EMILY). I say, Tom, my boy, she's rather an attractive, fascinating sort of woman, eh? Eh, Tom? (*nudging him*).

TOM (*after looking obtusely*). Which?

MERV. (*disgusted*). Oh, hang it, save your small jokes for the

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Old Bailey, or the Bar mess. Which should you choose, you noodle? Not the *old* one, thank you. Unless you prefer it.

TOM. What do you mean? (*Aside*) I never knew there was lunacy in the family before.

MERV. A man should certainly marry, as you said some time back—a *professional* man especially. Emily's got a pretty little fortune—not *very* much, but a backbone; and what is a barrister without a backbone?

TOM. Can't say—I never saw one. At least, not to my knowledge.

MERV. Oh, you know what I mean.

TOM. Yes, yes; something to *fall back upon.*

MERV. Just so. A fellow with an independence, a certainty—however small—possesses an immeasurable advantage over the mere struggler for his bread.

TOM. But to be dependant for that certainty on one's wife.

MERV. Go along? she's fond of you—always was. Her manner shows it (*pointing to flower in* TOM'S *buttonhole*).

TOM (*aside, dismayed*). By George, so it does.

MERV. *I* shan't stand in your way—she's yours.

TOM. But really I—

MERV. Not a word, I insist.

TOM. But I've never said a word that could—

MERV. (*wringing his hand*). *I'll* answer for her—there'll be no difficulty.

TOM (*aside*). How on earth can I.

MERV. *She's* young—*you* are young.

TOM (*suddenly*). Ah, that's just it—we're both young.

MERV. All the better. As it ought to be—both of an age, or nearly so—the husband a few years—half-a-dozen or so older, but not more, certainly not *more.*

EMILY (*up at piano* L C, *looking over music—to* PRIS.) What on earth are they talking so excitedly about?

PRIS. (*to her*). Let's listen, dear—it's a woman's prerogative. *Talking* and *listening* are conceded to us as our sex's rights; and after all, when those two privileges are judiciously combined, we want very little else.

TOM. I must say that on reflection your arguments as to the respective ages of husband and wife have thoroughly convinced me. I think with *you* that the man should be the older, *Very much* the older. Remember your own words—'How can a young woman feel any respect for a stripling,' etcetera.

MERV. Yes: but you're *not* a stripling—you're, let me see, you must be quite—

EMILY (*comes forward* L). What *is* this animated conversation about?

MERV. (*seizing her hand*). About *you*, my dear—about you and Tom here.

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ERNEST *appears* C *from* L—*pauses and listens.*

EMILY. Me and Tom?

MERV. Tom's told me all. How is it you've concealed it from me so long, eh?

EMILY. Concealed *what?*

ERNEST (*up* C, *aside*). What's he saying?

TOM (R C, *aside*). If I were only safe in Brick Court, I'd die happy.

MERV. It's only natural. Emily, Tom loves you, as you know, and I—

EMILY. Cousin Tom! love me! Oh, it's some mistake. Isn't it, Tom?

TOM (*nervously*). Well, really, I—I—. (*Aside*). I wonder where my *wife* is?

PRIS. (*aside*). I know very little of dear Tom if he cares to link his fortunes with a child like Emily. I could not mistake the meaning of his hurried remark to me just now, that he might ask me to perform a delicate task some day—the look and the pressure of the hand told me all—he loves me.

MERV. Now, sir, here is the dear girl—metaphorically in your arms. Do you reject her? Ask him, Emily (*pushes her across to* C).

EMILY (C). Ask him *what?* (*Turns a little, sees* ERNEST *at back*). There's Ernest listening—how mean of him. But I'll punish my gentleman. (*To* TOM). Dear Cousin Tom, the position in which I find myself is very awkward.

MERV. So it *is*—get closer to him.

EMILY. I didn't mean *that.*

MERV. (*irritated*). You don't know *what* you mean. You're too young to know your own mind.

TOM (*quickly*). That's what *I* say. She's too young—*much* too young to dream of marrying anybody.

EMILY. Oh, indeed! I dream of nothing *else.*

MERV. (*to* TOM). There you are. *Dreams* of you—you see.

ERNEST (*aside*). I'll bring this to a head, and pretty quickly too. If he's been talking rubbish to Emily, I'll—I'll—

PRIS. (*coming forward* L). Dear Tom is quite right, Horace; the idea of his marrying Emily! I blush for you.

MERV. (*in a rage*). Go and blush in your own room, then, and don't interfere in what doesn't concern you.

PRIS. (*aside*). 'What doesn't concern me.' (*Pressing her hand to her heart*). Quiet, quiet, little flatterer. (*Goes up* L.)

MERV. (*to Tom*). Now I'm a man of few words.

TOM. (*aside*). I never knew an inveterate gabbler who didn't always say the same.

MERV. *Very* few—*but* those few are to the point. I give you both ten minutes.

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EMILY *goes up* R.—ERNEST *darts away.*

EMILY. }
TOM. } What!

MERV. *Ten* minutes to give me your reply. (*Aside*). If he can't settle it all in that time he *must* be a noodle. (*To* TOM). I'm going to my study, make the most of the time I grant you, and remember I intend to use the power I possess like a tyrant as I am. (*Exit door* L 2 E.)

TOM (*crossing to* C *calling after him*). I say, Bluebeard, listen to reason. (*To* PRIS.) Sister Anne, just intercede, will you.

EMILY. (*up* R *aside*). Ernest's sufferings must be something awful. I can almost hear him writhe.

PRIS. (*coming down* L *of* TOM, *in an undertone*). Thomas.

TOM (*at back of ottoman, starts*).

PRIS. You despise money. So do I. There is a link that binds our sentiments together, and it is *not* a *golden* one, You scorn a marriage for money. So do *I*. Give me a man of intellect—one whose battle-cry is *brains*, not a *banking account*. You are such a man, Thomas, and—well, there, I have said enough, too much perhaps—but you will attribute it to my admiration of your character—so manly, so unselfish, so—a tear or two will flow—excuse me. (*Wipes her eyes.*)

TOM (*aside*). Damn it, here's another of 'em. Well in *this* case I can't say that I'm sorry I *am* married.

PRIS. (*taking* TOM'S *hand*). Bless you dearest, Thomas, bless you.

Exit door L *overcome by her feelings.*

TOM (*comes* C). How shameful to leave me alone with her; really I—(*turns* L *and finds Ernest pale and determined standing before him.*)

ERNEST (L C). You'll excuse me, Mr Gilroy, but you're a scoundrel.

TOM (C). I am not a scoundrel, and I don't excuse you.

ERNEST. You're a double dealer, sir.

TOM. I'm not a dealer at all, single or double, I'm a barrister, worse luck. (*Laughs.*)

ERNEST. What do you mean by undermining Emily's affections?

EMILY (*coming forward* R C). Ridiculous, Ernest; he's not undermined anything.

ERNEST. Of course *you* take his part. But I'll not be made a fool of any longer.

TOM (*laughing*). Quite right. Then leave off making a fool of yourself.

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ERNEST. Tom Gilroy, if you were not a relation.

TOM. Oh, waive that and speak out.

ERNEST. Then I tell you to your face that I consider your conduct despicable. You are well aware that I love Emily, that Emily loves me.

EMILY. Oh, indeed, I like that.

ERNEST. You *said* you did, before *he* came.

EMILY (*much hurt*). Go to your Fannys. (*Takes* R.)

TOM (*with a burst of laughter*). His what?

EMILY (R C). His Fanny Smiths.

TOM. Ha! ha! ha! this is delicious.

ERNEST (*in a rage*). Laugh away, Mr Gilroy, your profession makes you heartless. But I'll have *some* revenge. I—I—damme, I call you out! I'll warrant you're a better shot than *I* am, but I'll try your courage anyhow.

TOM. Call out a lawyer! The thing's an impossibility. Besides we should have to go to France or Belgium.

ERNEST. Then we'll go to both.

TOM. All right. We'll go to France first, and I'll shoot *you;* then off to Belgium, where you can shoot me. Anything for a quiet life.

ERNEST (*quickly*). Tom Gilroy, you're turning me into your ridicule.

TOM (*rather gravely*). Why, of course I am, you silly boy. Now, seriously, do you think I care twopence for Emily?

ERNEST. Eh?

TOM. Or that she cares a farthing for *me?*

ERNEST. I don't know *what* to think. Everything seems all wrong, and I know *this, I'd*—I'd kill anybody who took her from me.

EMILY (*up to* R C *quickly*). Do you mean that, Ernest?

ERNEST. Why, you *know* I do.

EMILY. No, I don't; you've never done it.

TOM. That's because you've never *been* taken from him.

EMILY. No, nor never *will* be.

ERNEST (*quickly*). Do *you* mean that?

EMILY. Did I ever tell you an untruth?

ERNEST. Yes; lots of times.

TOM. Ha! ha! ha!

EMILY. But I never meant to—you've tortured me enough, I'm sure.

ERNEST. Now, I put it to *you,* Tom, do I *look* like a torturer! (*Turns round on his heel*).

TOM (*looking him up and down*). Certainly not.

ERNEST. Very well, then.

EMILY. Very well, then.

TOM. It seems to me you're both in rather a fix, and I don't see who's to get you out of it.

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ERNEST. Why, *you* can, Tom.

EMILY. Yes, *you*, dearest Tom.

ERNEST. Not '*dearest*,' Emily.

TOM. Here, here, *cheapest* if you like—only don't quarrel.

ERNEST. Tom, we throw ourselves upon you. (*Leans on* TOM'S *left shoulder*).

EMILY. Yes, Tom, so we do. (*Same business on* TOM'S R *shoulder*).

TOM. Here, not both together; it's as much as I can do to support *myself*. Bear up, both of you, I beg. (*Throws them off*).

ERNEST. You don't know how devoted I am to Emily here. (*Pulls* TOM *by the* L *arm*).

EMILY. And you can't imagine how attached I am to Ernest there. (*Pulls* TOM *by the* R *arm*).

ERNEST. There, you hear her, Tom. (*Same business*).

TOM. Don't pull me in two. (*They leave go*).

EMILY. I've always loved Ernest, and if I *have* occasionally shown a little jealousy or ill-temper, I'm sure I'm punished enough for it *now*. Marry *you*, indeed—I'd as soon marry—I'd as soon marry—

TOM. There, there, don't go into particulars—somebody very awful, no doubt. I'll take my oath I don't want to marry *you*. It's altogether out of my power.

ERNEST. Anyway, I'd soon make it so; I'd—I'd—you should never live to take Emily from me. I'd—

TOM. Blow my brains out of course. The only course you could take which would render it impossible to retaliate.

ERNEST (*vexed*). Oh, you turn everything into a joke.

EMILY (*in same tone*). Yes; so you *do*, Tom.

TOM (*laughing*). Confound it, you don't want us all three to begin to *weep*, do you? 'Crier, juncta, in uno.' Ha! ha! ha!

ERNEST No, Tom, but—but— (*With a burst*). Oh, my dear fellow, you don't realize the awful nature of our position. (*Takes his* L *hand—*EMILY *his* R).

EMILY. Reflect, Tom—two young hearts—devoted—beating only for—. (*Begins to cry*).

TOM. This is affecting, and as you both hold a hand, I can't get at my pocket handkerchief. (*They both let go—going up* C). Here, let's go and chat the matter out in the open. Come along.

Strolls off C *and* R.

ERNEST (*to* EMILY). Do you think he'll see us through it?

EMILY. If not, we must see *ourselves*. Ernest, I am prepared for the worst—elopement—anything. (*They are going up*).

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ERNEST. Hang it, do you know what that costs?

EMILY. How *should* I?

ERNEST. It would take a whole year of a fellow's allowance, Emily.

EMILY. Oh, you've no courage!

ERNEST. Yes, I've lots of courage, but no cash; and they won't trust us at the Railway Station.

They exeunt C *and* R, *wrangling as they go off.*

Enter MUGGLES *from door* L—*he watches them off.*

MUG. (R C). Pooty creetures. 'Sure sich a pair was never seen so justly formed to meet by natur.' Hem! Shakespeare. Never was a young couple so completely cut out for connuberal companionship, but *halas*! it 'ne'er can be.' 'Beyold how 'eedless of their fate the little creetures play.' Hem! poet as I can't call to mind at the moment. Ha, here's the Major!

Enter MAJOR BILLITER *from door* L.

MAJOR (L C). By Jove, must have been asleep ever so long—doosid rude of *me*. Hilloa, Muggles.

MUG. Hilloa, Major.

MAJOR. Where's everybody?

MUG. *H*out in the *h*open *h*air.

MAJOR. Muggles, you and I have always been very good friends. You're a very worthy, respectable person, Mr Muggles, highly so.

MUG. Hoh! 'Praise from Sir Hudibras Stanley is praise indeed!' Hem! dramatist, name unknown.

MAJOR. I want you to do me a favour.

MUG. Nobody more ready to do anybody a favour than self for—'for a consideration.' Hem! Scotch party who have recently had a centenuary.

MAJOR (*mysteriously*). You have opportunities of seeing Miss Priscilla Mervyn alone.

MUG. 'Undreds. But as a man of *h*onour, I am bound to say I never avails myself of the privilege.

MAJOR. Do so at the earliest opportunity. Give her this letter.

MUG. (*obtusely*). I don't see it (*holds out his* L *hand*).

MAJOR. And accept this sovereign (*gives him one*).

MUG. (*taking sovereign and letter*). Ah, I see it now.

MAJOR. You will of course be careful that you are unobserved, Muggles. You understand me?

MUG. Puffickly.

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MAJOR. Just so.

'Tral lal lal lar lal lar lar.'

Strolls up and off C *and* L, *singing.*

MUG. So old Priscilla's got a *hoffer* at last. Good. She's in the way here—interferes with my plans a good deal. Then she's always wanting to see my books. Not that she ever do. (*Crosses up* L).

Enter MISS FANNY SMITH *from door* L.

FANNY (*crossing to* R C). What a relief to get into this nice cool room after the warm love old Mervyn's been making to me. I couldn't get away from him.

MUGGLES *comes down* L C.

I—. (*turns, sees* MUG., *starts*). Muggles, what a start you gave me. (*Sits on ottoman*).

MUG. Beg pardon, miss, I'm sure. Last thing in the world as I'd do for to startle you, miss. I'm sure if master knew I'd startled *you*, miss, dismissal without warning would be the consequence of sich—

FANNY. Sich, Muggles?

MUG. Sich condick, miss. Master's express *horders* is—'Look after Miss Smith—see as Miss Smith haves all she wants—mind as her comforts is attended to afore everybody. Ha, miss, it's something to rouse such sentiments in such a *boosom* as master's, which, on a hordinary calculation, have panted these fifty-five year.

FANNY. I'm sure I'm very much indebted to Mr Mervyn for his kindness, and to you too, Muggles, for your unremitting attention.

MUG. Ha, miss, there is some parties as it is 'appiness to attend on, and *hothers* as is gall and wormwood to them as waits. Sometimes when I'm 'anding Mr Gilroy his plate at dinner, I can scarce keep from 'itting 'im 'ard on the yead with it first, which would nat'rally provoke remark.

FANNY. On *his* part, most probably. Then you don't like your master's cousin. (*Aside*). Ha, ha, this is delightful.

MUG. Like him! Like a party as watches one as if one was a ticket-of-leave! However, when he's married to Miss *Hemily*—

FANNY (*rising indignantly*). What! married to—

MUG. Don't you know as they're engaged. At least they're going to be. Oh, master's settled all that.

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FANNY. *Has* he, though?

MUG. That'll be the *first* match, and the *second*—(*grinning significantly at her.*)

FANNY (*amused despite her vexation*). Yours, Muggles.

MUG. Mine? not by no means. I were born a bachelor, and I shall continue in the same persuasion.

FANNY. Quite right, Muggles.

Enter TOM C *from* R. *He comes down* R C.

MUG. But, master is another pair of shoes. You must have observed. (*Turns his head, catches* TOM'S *eye, and collapses.*)

TOM. (*up* R C). I heard your master calling for you a moment ago.

MUG. I fly. (*Goes to door* L. *Aside*). If that fellow's agoing to upset any of my plans, I'll pison him. (*Exit door* L.)

FANNY (R C—*with ill-concealed passion*). So, at last we meet.

TOM (*coming left of ottoman*). At last.

FANNY. And you're engaged, it appears.

TOM. Engaged! I'm married.

FANNY. What?

TOM. I believe our union was a perfectly legal one. (*Sits on ottoman.*)

FANNY. Yes, indeed. Worse luck.

TOM. *As* you say. Worse luck.

FANNY. For *you*?

TOM. For *you*. I thought you intended leaving England.

FANNY. So I did, but something drew me back again. (*Looks at him.*)

TOM. And that something?

FANNY. Don't know; a lurking fondness for—

TOM. Yes?

FANNY. My native land.

TOM. Oh. And it's five years since we met.

FANNY. Yes; five long years.

TOM. *Long* years, did you find them?

FANNY (*quickly*). No, no, *short*. I mean short. (*Aside*). He's better looking than ever. (*Crosses to* L C.)

TOM. Lapse of time has not changed the temper, I presume.

FANNY. I should say not in the slightest. But I can't be sure.

TOM. Why!

FANNY. Because I've had no one to try it on since—since we parted.

TOM. Let me see, five years—why, you must be—

FANNY (*sits in an arm chair* L C). Just five years older than when we last met, of course. It's remarkable we should meet like this.

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TOM. Ah, is it fate, I wonder?

FANNY. In time to prevent your crime.

TOM. Crime?

FANNY. Marriage with Emily.

TOM. What do you mean? I couldn't.

FANNY. No, but you *would*.

TOM. Hear me swear—

FANNY. No; I heard you once five years ago, that was sufficient.

TOM. Enough to make me. I married you as a penniless girl, and I found you'd deceived me.

FANNY. Found I had money. What a disgrace!

TOM. I felt it so. You knew my position. Up to my eyes in debt, with the determination, ay, and the ability to pay off every shilling by my own exertions, and not fling away my wife's money to Oxford harpies and sixty-per-cent. vampyres. I never imagined you possessed money.

FANNY. Neither did I—when we married it became *yours*.

TOM. To be dependant upon a wife for money! Why, I could never have looked my own servants in the face with the knowledge that I had to draw their very wages from—from—

FANNY. And yet you actually concealed our marriage from your cousin, because without his consent you could never get your own money. Don't you see the absurdity of the position you take. He happened to be abroad, and—

TOM. And I did not choose to wait, so I married. After a quarrel one day you said—

FANNY. I said what I did'nt mean. I said words which if tears could have washed them from one's recollections would have been obliterated long since.

TOM. You told me of my dependant position. You flung your money in my face.

FANNY. Having previously flung it at your feet.

TOM. I didn't choose to stoop and pick it up, Fanny, and I left you, as any man of spirit would have done.

FANNY. And I never asked you to come back, as any woman of spirit would have applauded me for.

TOM. Very true. I have got on *un*assisted, and when I can support a wife—in the style she has a right to expect—

FANNY (*anxiously*). Yes, Tom, yes—

TOM. Then and then only will I come back humbly—

FANNY. Humbly?

TOM. And ask for a renewal of those ties which *she* alone severed by a deception which—which—

FANNY. And when—supposing such a proposition were entertained by the injured wife—

TOM. Injured!

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FANNY. Injured wife: when would your lordship consider it *not* humiliating to acknowledge your lawful spouse?

TOM (*excitedly*). When I *am* 'your lordship,' or on the road to it. When I've got my silk gown.

FANNY. (*Crosses to* R). But that may be ever so long. By that time you'll be a grizzly elderly barrister, so taken up with your profession that—

TOM. I shall have no time for the parks, the opera, theatres, concerts, and the numerous other deliglits without which your existence would be a blank.

FANNY. It's not true. I never go anywhere when Captain Radstock's away.

TOM (*in a rage, rising*). Captain Radstock—does he take you about?

FANNY. In the absence of my lawful protector, somebody *must*.

TOM. That makes *me* look rather a fool, madam.

FANNY. Very *much* so, indeed, but then he doesn't guess I'm married. (*Wickedly*). He *can't*, from the way he goes on. (*Cross to* L).

TOM (*almost unable to master his rage*). Oh, indeed—so he '*goes on*,' does he! And you consider you're behaving properly in being seen about with—with— (*Sits on ottoman again*).

FANNY (*seated in arm-chair* L). I would rather lead a domestic life, if I had the opportunity—the pleasant late dinner with the curtains closed and the gas lighted—the music and chat, and the cozy hour or two, with coffee, and one or two of my husband's old friends smoking a cigar and talking of their old bachelor days—the calm pleasant close to the long day; how charming is the picture if it could but be realized.

TOM (*aside*). By Jove, how true her words are! What a waste my life is. What are *my* evenings? Soda and brandy, and bitter thoughts. Fanny, if such a picture as you have drawn could be—

FANNY (*with severity*). It could *not*. You yourself broke the chain, it can never be rejoined. It seemed at first formed of the lightest love links, but you soon let me feel you found them fetters. And so you shook them off.

TOM (*with a burst of affection*). Make me once more a slave, Fanny; I have suffered more than you can *ever* have done.

FANNY. No, no, my days for making slaves are past. My heart is softer now.

TOM (*bitterly*). Harder you mean, or you would not let your husband plead for your forgiveness vainly.

FANNY (*up to him quickly*). And you *do* plead for forgiveness, then? You do regret the past—you—

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TOM (*with half comic tearfulness*). I want my wife once more. I want to make up for lost years of what might have been a happy companionship, but which has been a bitter lonely life for *me*. (*Seizing her hand, and speaking with rapidity and great fervour*). You don't know what it is—after the day's work, worry and excitement—to find yourself in your dull dusty chambers without a living soul to speak to—with no sound audible but the distant roar of the busy streets, and the ticking of the clock upon your mantelpiece, that seems to mock you with its ceaseless 'I go on for ever' kind of monotony. (*Draws her closer to him*). Ah, Fanny, if you could only be a bachelor for a little bit, you'd *pity* me; pity's akin to love, and you'd forgive me.

FANNY (*turning to him with great affection*). I do, Tom; but your cousin—

TOM. Hang all the cousins in the universe. You're mine once more, darling; nothing shall ever separate us.

FANNY. Nothing, Tom, nothing!

TOM. We're partners once again.

FANNY. Yes, yes, and *this* time—

TOM. Partners for life! (*Rapturously embraces her.*)

Simultaneously—Enter MERVYN C *from* L,—EMILY *and* ERNEST C *from* R.—PRISCILLA *from* L *door, followed by* MUGGLES.—MERVYN *throws up his hands in astonishment, up* L C.—PRISCILLA *shrieks and falls into the arms of* MUGGLES, L.—FANNY *covers her eyes with her hands,* ERNEST *beside her, up* R C.

TABLEAU.

ACT DROP, NOT TOO QUICK.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Library and study at* MR MERVYN'S.—*Book cases with books.—Busts over them.—Handsome fire-place up* R C.—*Doors* R *and* L 2 E.—*Window* C, *showing landscape through.—Door up* L C.—*Turkey Carpet.—Rich furniture of carved oak, covered with scarlet or green velvet.—A large library table* R C. *—Easy chair* L *of table.—Pens, ink, paper, ruler, &c., all on table.—Couch* L.—*Chairs about stage.*

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MERVYN is walking to and fro excitedly.

SIR ARCHIBALD DRELINCOURT seated L of table.

SIR A. Really it is very sad, very sad indeed, my dear friend.

MERV. Sad! *Sad!* Sir Archibald Drelincourt. 'Sad' is not the word. Not the word at all.

SIR A. Well, we'll say 'distressing.'

MERV. Oh, *distressing* doesn't meet the case. Doesn't come any where near it.

SIR A. Well, 'maddening' then.

MERV. Ah, *maddening's* nearer the mark if you like. Yes, it is maddening. And it's always paid such an enormous percentage—such an overwhelming percentage.

SIR A. Overwhelming percentages soon wear themselves out. I find the consols quite good enough for *me*. Those with a few foreign securities that I can rely on suffice for my 'umble wants, and enable me to subscribe my occasional mite—I say it advisedly—*mite*—to those distant objects of charity, concerning which I have so often spoken to you.

MERV. Misfortunes never come singly. Thwarted and upset as I was already, here comes this terrible news. If the Kangaroo copper mines *have* collapsed I'm—I'm—damme, I'm stumped, Drelincourt. There is only one word for my position, and that is *stumped*, sir. (*Crosses up to* L C.)

SIR A. (*shrugging his shoulders*). Ha—ah! Unwise investment—very. And the panic is almost certain to smash up Hopkinsons.

MERV. (*starting*). You don't tell me *that!* Why man, I relied on Hopkinsons as I would have done on the Bank of England. I wouldn't—

Enter MUGGLES *suddenly from door* L 2 E *with an 'Echo' newspaper.*

MUG. (L). Pretty noos. Hopkinson's put up their shutters.

MERV. (*sinks on chair up* L C). Talk of the devil!—

MUG. That's old Dan'l Hopkinson. Leastways everybody says so. He's been living on a wolcanium all these years, and now as there's a regler 'ruption, he's packed up all as he could lay 'old of and heloped to Spain. Second *h*edition of the *Hekker*. (*Gives it to* MERVYN.) How they can sell you such a lot of bad noos for a 'apenny is astonishing.

MERV. This is a double blow, indeed.

MUG. (*aside*). One, two—buckle my shoe. Hem! Poet as devotes hisself to the nussery.

MERV. (*rises, takes* R *corner. Aside*). And Priscilla's money

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was invested there—what—what shall I do? Muggles, leave us.

MUG. Suttingly. (*Aside*). He's agoing to ask the Bart. to assist him. Vain 'ope. Catch a phi-lan-*thro*-phist assisting of anybody unless its *hisself*. (*Exit door* L 2 E.)

MERV. (*up to table* R C). Drelincourt, I never asked a favour of any man before in my life, but this dreadful business has thrown me as it were on my beam ends. I have one or two important payments to make early in the month, and—and—in short, can you assist me? Be assured I shall never forget the obligation, and when I've had time to turn myself round—

SIR A. (*putting on his gloves, demurely*). Mervyn, my friend, my *dear* friend—

MERV. Your *old* friend. (*Offers his hand.*)

SIR A. My '*old-enough-to-know-better*' friend. I make a point of never assisting neighbours. The system's a bad one—a very bad one. Were you on the banks of the Bangalora river—

MERV. Oh, damn the Bangalora river. (*Sits* R *of table.*)

SIR A. (*very quietly*). They have *endeavoured* to do so, but in vain. Irrigation, drainage, and the water system generally, is at present in its infancy in *that* neglected clime. But pumps and perseverance may yet do much.

MERV. You can answer for the pumps, no doubt.

SIR A. (*rising*). Mr Mervyn, your behaviour is uncalled for, your jest is obscure, and your general tone offensive. If you have lost your money, you might keep your temper. Learn philosophy, my dear sir. Remember we were born to suffer

MERV. (*in a rage*). You'll remember it if you don't get out.

SIR A. (*drawing himself up*). Get out, sir! Are you mad or intoxicated? *You're* not the only person in the world who has suffered misfortunes. Look at the pigs I lost last winter; remember how the hail storm beat down my best field of wheat the year before, and a cow worth twenty pounds choked herself under my very nose with a turnip. Did *I* go about insulting my neighbours? Did *I* tell people to get out? No, sir, I trust that in a more resigned and meeker spirit I—

MERV. (*calls*). Muggles!

Enter MUGGLES *sharply from door* L 2 E.

Oh, you're there, eh.

MUG. (L C). Thought it best to be as near the key-hole—I mean the door—as possible,

MERV. (*rises*). Show Sir Archibald Drelincourt out.

SIR A. (*in a rage*). It serves me right for—for ever associating with such *canaille*. (*Exit door* L 2 E.)

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MUG. 'Ere, are you going to stand being called a canal? It's only another way of cutting you.

MERV. Rubbish! he means I'm low, vulgar.

MUG. Don't see as that's any excuse myself. (*Exit door* L 2 E.)

MERV. There's a type of what I may expect. (*Coming forward* C). What's to be done? (*Goes up* L *of table*). What's to be done? (*Sinks into chair* L *of table.*)

Enter PRISCILLA *from door up* L C.

PRIS. (*leaning over his shoulder*). Horace, dear, what's this dreadful news? is it true?

MERV. Dreadful news is *always* true; it's only good news there's ever any doubt about. I'm next but one to ruined, my dear.

PRIS. But there's my money,

MERV. My dear sister, don't you know we both rowed in the same boat. Your money has gone with mine, and we're little better than a couple of paupers. What's to be done?

PRIS. (*with a sudden courage*). Well, brother, the first thing we must do is to *bear up*, the *last* thing to *give way*. People have lost their money before *us*. We're not the first folks who have had to rough it—and let us thank heaven that we've health and strength *to* rough it, that *your* hat and *my* bonnet cover our families, and (*taking his hand*) we'll go hand in hand through life the best of friends, and in the best of spirits, if we must give up the luxuries we never wanted, and learn to prize the simpler pleasures of a humbler but a no less happy life. (*They hold each other's hands.*)

MERV. You're a true woman, Priscilla, old girl, a good woman, and I'll try my hardest to follow your bright example—if I can.

PRIS. (*goes to fire-place up* R C *crying*). Of course there'll be a sale.

MERV. (*in horror*). A what?

PRIS. Gracious, man, don't be absurd. A sale—stair carpet out of the drawing room window, catalogues of 'superior modern furniture,' dreadful men with husky voices on the doorstep, and every old maid in the neighbourhood collected on forms and making believe to bid.

MERV. (*aside*). How detestably graphic she is.

PRIS. The furniture's excellent and will fetch a long sum. (*Coming forward a little*). Why, my parrot's good for a ten pound note.

MERV. A ten pound—

PRIS. Certainly. Look at the low language he uses.

MERV. Ha! I forgot that.

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PRIS. *He* hasn't, though. Bless his old beak. (*Goes up to mantelpiece again*). We'll take a nice cheap little cottage. Ernest must go into a merchant's office, and Emily—

Enter MUGGLES *from door* L 2 E.

MERV. What's to become of Muggles?

MUG. *Percisely.* What's to become of Muggles?

PRIS. (*indignantly*). Why, of course he will go away and look for another situation, and endeavour to do his duty—(*moving towards door up* L C)—and keep his place. (*Exit door up* L C.

MERVYN *rises, gets round and sits* R *of table.*

MUG. (*smiling pityingly. Aside*). She means well. She's a *hiritating* old gal, but she *means* well. 'Keep his place.' Yes, he *means* to. Well, sir, and how do you feel now? Do you see your course at all? Eh!

MERV. Beyond giving up all I can, and endeavouring by retrenchment, rigid economy, and the greatest—

MUG. Bah! Don't talk copy books, 'cos my eddication having been neglected, texts is troublesome. Don't you see your game?

MERV. My game?

MUG. Miss Smith.

MERV. (*rises, violently*). Be silent, sir, you know how I admired that young lady. That—that—I was most anxious to make her mistress of Mervyn Hall—but remember the position in which—which—(*comes* R C.) No, Muggles, I believe and hope her boxes are being packed preparatory to her departure from a house which she has—she has—(*goes up a little.*)

MUG. Which she's '*what?*' Now look at the affair sensible. It seems as your cousin Mr Gilroy and her have met before,—is in fact, old acquaintances. Very good. They meets at the 'ouse of a mutual friend. Carried away by the *h*eloquency of the legal party, the lady reclines for a moment in his arms. *H*unfortunately, (and the same thing 'ave 'appened to myself) other parties arrive at the *critickle* moment. Result.—General explosion. But very big explosions often *h*arises from a remarkable small amount of powder.

MERV. (R C). Muggles, occupying a humble sphere, you have stopped short of being a clever scoundrel, with a further field and larger opportunities you might have turned out a hero. Your arguments are quite unanswerable, and so—

MUG. And so you're agoing to try and answer 'em; I never knew nobody as didn't do the same thing. Now listen to

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reason. She's got money—got a lot of money—and it's at her own disposal.

MERV. How can you be sure of that?

MUG. Bless your 'art, leave us servants alone for twigging parties with long purses. There's a sort of *h*electricity about 'em as communicates *d*irect to the servants' *'all*. When one of your rich city friends comes to see you, do you think we don't sum him up on the spot. The very *h*accents of his voice says 'tin.' There's ready money in the curl of his lip, and *h*independence in his *hi*. As you pass behind him a-wa'ting at dinner, 'is very *yair roil* is red*olient* of property. As for them young clerks and seedy old swells as you 'ave down sometimes as 'fill-ups,' the very way they wipes their boots on the yall *mat* speaks volumes. Miss Smith mayn't be a million*aire*, nor yet a million*airess*, and though the situation with Mr Gilroy were equi*vo-kial*, she's your only chance—your forlorn 'ope.

MERV. But all this is guess-work—mere surmise. You have really no proof that—

MUG. I see her last Toosday a sittin' and writin' cheques by *yolesale*.

MERV. No, no, it can't be. I wouldn't marry a woman of my *own* age for money; still less would I this girl who—who —(*with intensity.*) Besides you know that I—I—. Muggles, you know the mystery that—that—

MUG. (*densely*). I know *nothing*. I remember nothing. The facts of the past have vanished from the memory of Muggles.

MERV. No pretence, no sham, no *lies*, Muggles—you forget *nothing*, and you have taken ample and *cruel* care that *I* should forget nothing as *well*. (*In grief.*)

MUG. (*still obtusely*). I've forgotten what *ought* to be forgotten, and I'm not agoing to remember it again if I don't *choose!* As the witness, when he was accused of having a bad memory, said to the judge, 'It's not me, Recorder.' Why you should always be *yarping* on the one string, I can't make out. You paid a certain sum to get rid of a certain annoyance—and you aint *been* annoyed, have you?

MERV. But don't you see, man, that if she were proved to be living *still*, I should simply—

MUG. No, I don't—I don't see nothing, and I won't—

MERV. I must write at once to Atkins and Jones. (*Goes and sits* R *of table.*) Something must be done instantly—my head swims and my hand shakes so, I can scarcely—(*begins writing nervously.*)

MUG. (*aside*). Once married to Miss Hess, and he's more under my thumb than ever. That's one way out of the yole. Then there's the Major's proposal to the old lady. (*With con-*

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tempt). Bah! 'arf pay—'arf pay, not worth fighting for. Don't seem to care for a smash and a sell-up, though. Hang speckelation—whenever he does anything without consulting *me* it's always a mull.

MAJOR BILLITER *bursts in, door* L 2 E.

MAJOR (*crossing to* L *of table*). What's this I hear? Can't be true, Mervyn, my dear fellow. Met Drelincourt rushing down the avenue declaring you'd lost your money and your wits at the same time.

MERV. Quite true as regards the former. Don't pity me, Major, I'm too cut up to stand sympathy. (*Goes on writing.*)

MAJOR (*comes* C *to* MUGGLES.) Muggles, what's it all mean?

MUG. It means the panic 'ave *h*added two fresh victims to its carpacious *mor*.

MAJOR. *Two*. *Two* victims!

MUG. Brother and sister. Master and Miss Priscilla. Miss Priscilla in partickler.

MAJOR. Impossible!

MUG. Quite so. Still it's a fact.

MAJOR. But I always understood—

MUG. You always understood as Hopkinson's was reg'lar rocks. But when *h*earthquakes comes sudden, rocks is apt to suffer.

MAJOR (*in horror. Half aside*). Why, confound it, I—

MUG. (*quietly*). You *did*, and there's no getting out of it.

MAJOR (*blusteringly*). What do you mean, sir? How dare you.

MUG. (*shaking his finger at him*). Look here, Major, the governor there's a writing a letter, and it's rude to *'oller*. Any further *h*observations you may feel disposed to make, please make 'em '*Sutty vochey*.' Hem! Forrin Hauthor.

MAJOR (*aside*). The scoundrel's right. I must manœuvre. (*To* MUGGLES *in undertones*). You remember that note I gave you some time back.

MUG. It wasn't a note. It was only a sovereign.

MAJOR. Pshaw! a letter. I must have it *back*, Muggles.

MUG. What, the sovereign?

MAJOR. No, the—the—

MUG. The billy doo?

MAJOR. Nothing of the kind, sir. A mere business communication, but I particularly require its return. I'll give you another sovereign if you can—

MUG. Look here, Major, as I am powerful I'll be mussiful. You're on the magistrates' bench here, with authority—your word's *lor*, and precious rum lor it often *is*. Now if ever I

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apply for a license for the 'Dog and Duck,' you'll see as it aint refused.

MAJOR. I'm afraid the notorious character of the place will prevent my—

MUG. (*going* L). Then I *must* see as she gets that letter.

MAJOR. Here! Here! Consider the 'Dog and Duck' licensed. I promise; and *my* word—a soldier's word—

MUG. There's the *dockyment*, and it's a bargain. (*Gives him letter.*)

MAJOR (*aside*). What a relief. (*Goes up* R C *to* MERVYN). Mervyn, my dear fellow, you must bear up. There's my hand. Anything an old campaigner can do for you at any time, command—command. I've had losses myself—devilish heavy ones, but I whistled away my sorrows, sir. You do the same, and all's sure to come right in the end. (*Exit door* L 2 E *singing*) 'When the heart of a man is oppressed with care, &c.'

MERV. *sits dejected with his head resting on his hand.*

MUG. (*in smiling admiration of the Major*). 'How happy the soldier what lives on his pay. And something or other a shilling a day.' Hem!- Military poet—partially forgotten. (*Goes up* C. *Looking through window*). He don't feel misfortunes, not *'im*. He's the sort of—oh, Law! (*Apparently sees something alarming, which causes him to start violently. He staggers down to back of table, and lets his hands fall heavily on it, quite overcome.*)

MERV. (*startled, rises nervously*). What the deuce is the matter, man! My nerves are sufficiently upset already without—without—(*quite upset, sits again.*)

MUG. (*with his hand to his heart. Going* C *to* L). Down, down, perturbed spirit. Phew! (*To* MERV.) Other parties has nerves as well as *you*. (*Aside*). I could have sworn it was—it was—pah! But that's impossible. *He's* booked safe enough, and likenesses *do* appear in the best reggle-ated back gardens.

ERNEST *and* EMILY *have entered from door* L 2 E *unperceived.* —EMILY *goes behind* MERVYN'S *table, and places her arm round his neck, at the same moment* ERNEST (L *of* MUGGLES) *coughs.* MERVYN *starts slightly,* MUGGLES *violently, his nerves being evidently upset.*)

EMILY (*at back of table*). *Dear* Cousin Horace.

MUG. (*aside*). Railly, these sudden shocks should be considered in a party's wages.

ERNEST. Muggles.

MUG. Yes, Mr *Hernest*.

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ERNEST. We wish to be *alone* with your master.

MUG. Suttinly, sir. (*Going towards door* L. *Aside*). Well, it *were* a remarkable likeness. it were a—

Catches ERNEST'S *eye, and exit door* L 2 E.

EMILY. Ernest and I have settled it all, dear, and cousin Priscilla says she's charmed with it; the notion's splendid.

MERV. What notion, dear?

ERNEST (L *of table*). Well, in the first place we're going to get married.

MERV. Marry your aunt; you can't do it.

ERNEST. No, Emily and me. She's got an income. I'll *show* you what the education you have helped me to will result in. Lord Rockleigh, my old college friend, will give me three hundred a year as secretary to-morrow, and jump at it, and we'll all live together, a downright happy family, Uncle Horace. (*Places his arm round* EMILY'S *waist.*)

MERV. My dear boy, you speak impossibilities.

EMILY. Oh, but it's settled. We've as good as taken the house. haven't we, Ernest.

ERNEST. Better.

EMILY. But before we do *anything*, we're going to make conditions, Horace dear. You must tell him, Ernest.

ERNEST. You must shake hands with Tom.

EMILY. And forgive him.

MERV. (*rises, crosses to* L. EMILY *comes down* R. ERNEST *comes* C). Never! Don't misjudge me. It is *not* from any foolish jealous feeling, my short silly dream is at an end, and I blush now at my own conceit and selfishness. That young lady's hold over my soft old heart has lost its power. But Tom—my old friend and relative, to *know* what he must have done, and yet permit me to—to—

EMILY (*crossing to* C). But don't you see that's just what he didn't do. He tried his best to argue you out of proposing to her, and was too much a gentleman, no doubt, to state his reasons. It now seems they were old acquaintances, and probably his knowledge of her prompted the advice he gave you.

MERV. By Jove, Emily, that's true. (*Takes* L *corner*). I see the force of the—

FANNY SMITH *appears at door up* L C, *dressed for travelling*

FANNY (*meekly*). May I come in? (*Comes down* C.)

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They all three appear very uncomfortable.

EMILY (R C. *After a slight pause.* *At* FANNY). The carriage is ordered, I believe, Ernest?

ERNEST (R). I have given instructions.

FANNY (L C. *Aside*). Poor things, I'm not surprised—it's only natural. (*To* MERVYN). Mr Mervyn, notwithstanding the painful position in which you beheld me a few hours since—

EMILY (*aside*). Indeed! There didn't seem to be much *pain* about it.

MERV. (*loftily*). Pray, madam, do not allude to that unpleasant circumstance.

FANNY. I wish to say good-bye before going—to shake you by the hand—to say a word or two of sympathy, however unwelcome they may prove—for I have heard, believe me, with sincere grief, of the sudden heavy loss you—(*is overcome.*)!

MERV. (*blowing his nose, a little moved. Aside*). If she cries, I'm done for.

ERNEST (*aside to* EMILY). She really appears cut up.

EMILY. Cut up! Ha! *The crocodile.*

FANNY (*to* MERV). I have a few remarks to make to you, which—

EMILY (*coldly*). Pray, make them.

FANNY. Which are for your private ear.

EMILY (*huffed*). Ho! indeed!

ERNEST (*to* EMILY). We'd better clear out. She *can* do no further harm.

EMILY (*going to door* R). Oh, certainly. (*To* ERNEST). And you could admire that woman. (*Exit in a restrained rage door* R 2 E.)

ERNEST. I wish I could be mean enough to listen. (*Exit door* 2 E R.)

MERV. (*crossing in front to* R, *indicating easy chair* L *of table*). Pray be seated.

FANNY *goes up and sits* L *of table.* MERV. *sits* R *of table, fidgetty, the more so from her self-possession.*

FANNY (*with perfect composure*). Mr Mervyn, in ten minutes or so I leave your hospitable roof—

MERV. Mine no longer.

FANNY. Don't interrupt me—

MERV. Madam!

FANNY. If you please. I am sorry to go away—leaving a bad impression, and Emily I will *never* forgive.

MERV. Eh?

FANNY. Until she asks *my* forgiveness.

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MERV. That she will—

FANNY (*quickly*). Do before long. However, as regards my being discovered—let us speak out and call a spade a spade—almost embracing—

MERV. (*quickly*). *Quite. Quite.*

FANNY. Just so. Mr Gilroy, that naturally aroused your indignation, your *jealous* indignation.

MERV. Jealous!

FANNY. You admired me. You would have wished to make me Mrs Mervyn, but—(*very markedly*)—that you could *not do.*

MERV. (*jumps up sharply, much agitated*). How do you know *that*, madam? How do you know that? Who has been talking to you about *my* affairs? Who has dared to—to—

FANNY. Nobody. What's the matter? I was only going to say it would be an impossibility, because—

MERV. (*painfully agitated*). Because—

FANNY. Because I happen to possess a husband already.

MERV. *You! you* possess a—(*sinks into chair, relieved*). I breathe once more. I thought you were going to say that *I*—Phew!

FANNY. Yes, Mr Mervyn, I'm a married woman.

MERV. (*rises, speaks across the table*). Oh, indeed. And you actually, positively bring that fact forward as an excuse for your behaviour. Don't you see it aggravates it, madam. (*Comes down front, then back again*). But there, there, I've no right to talk to you like this; the carriage will soon be ready, and—excuse me, my time is valuable, and this sudden change in our fortunes necessitates my—(*sits again.*)

FANNY. Listening to reason. Listening to a friend whom you may find where you least expect it.

MERV. (*bitterly*). Ha! ha! Yes, it will certainly be *there.*

FANNY. I know something of your family arrangements.

MERV. (*again alarmed*). *You do?* You'll excuse me, but—

FANNY (*with authority*). You'll excuse *me*, but I shall be obliged if you will hear me out without interruption. You've come to grief.

MERV. Well, it's come to *me.*

FANNY. Same thing. You had an eccentric relative, I believe, who left a strange will to the effect that if his rather wild nephew, Mr Gilroy, married against your consent before the age of thirty-five, his very considerable legacy was to go to *you.*

MERV. Quite true. Bernard was half mad, only it doesn't do to say so.

FANNY. Suppose he *should* marry without your consent.

MERV. He knows better.

FANNY. Don't make so sure of that.

MERV. My dear madam, I make sure of nothing for the

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future. I made sure of the stability of Hopkinson's—I made sure of the big profits from the Rangaroo mine—I made sure of Tom's good faith, of Drelincourt's friendship, of your simplicity, of—of—. Bah! everything's false and bad, and—

FANNY. Suppose he—a—he *has* married?

MERV. What!

FANNY. People *do* marry sometimes, and conceal the fact for years.

MERV. (*rising quickly, again bursting out*). Madam! I don't know whether it is by design or by accident, but you are continually making allusions which—. (*Aside*). But *she* couldn't know anything.

FANNY. I'm sorry I bungle the matter so, but I'll endeavour to come to the point in as few words as possible.

MERV. If you please. The fewer the better. (*Sits again.*)

FANNY. If Tom *has* married—Mr Gilroy I mean—the money's *yours*, and you can retrieve your position without the slightest difficulty.

MERV. (*rising, indignantly*). Take Tom's money! Blight the prospects of as good a lad as ever lived! If he *has* married—poor boy! (although he might have told me) why, all the more reason he should have his money, and I wouldn't touch a shilling of it if I were starving. (*Crosses to* L *corner agitated.*)

FANNY. You really mean that?

MERV. (*up to her*). Mean it, ha! ha! I should think so, and that any woman could have brought herself to make such a proposition simply amazes me—*amazes* me, Miss Smith, and I *nay* add distresses me as well.

FANNY. Oh, you dear old man!

MERV. What!

FANNY (*rising*). You dear, darling, nankeenified old love! I must hug you (*approaches him.*)

MERV. Go along, ma'am. (*Runs up* R, *round table, and behind it in alarm.*)

FANNY *follows him to* R *of table, then sits at his place with comical authority.*) (*Points to easy chair* L *of table*). Sit down. (MERVYN *sits* L *of table.*)

FANNY (*taking off her gloves*). Now you stop over there a bit whilst I write. There, I can't write with steel pens, give me *quills*. they make such a nice noise. (*Selects paper, pens, &c., and commences writing.*)

MERV. (*quite non-plussed. Aside*). That's a remarkable young woman! She's a genius, or she's mad, or she's something or other remarkable. I'm as rude to her as a man can well be in his own house, and she seems to like me all the better for it. There's some mystery about her. (TOM *enters unperceived from door* L 2 E.) There's something more than meets the—

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TOM (L *of* MERVYN.) Eye.

MERV. (*looks up, sees* TOM). Oh *you're* there, sir, eh?

TOM. Yes; I'm here, sure enough.

MERV. (*rises, comes* C). *So*, sir, I've heard a very pretty story about you! A charming story, Mr Thomas Gilroy.

TOM (*coming* L C). That's rather odd, for do you know I've just been the recipient of a highly interesting narrative concerning *you*.

MERV. (*staggered*). What do you mean by *that*, sir? If anyone presumes to say anything of *me*, sir, calculated in any way to—to—hang it, Tom, speak out. I've suffered all day from hints and innuendos and vague remarks which—which—what the devil *have* you heard, Thomas Gilroy?

TOM. Ha! ha! ha! what *haven't* I heard!

MERV. *That* I don't care a farthing for. But before you reply, tell me, sir, as your *guardian*, what you meant by getting married and concealing the fact?

TOM. And tell *me*, sir, as your *ward*, what you meant by doing the same.

MERV. (*staggering back, overcome*). How did you know—I mean how did you *guess*—how did—

TOM. There's a sympathy between Benedicks. It's a wonder we never found each other out before.

MERV. Then you are—

TOM. Married? Very much so. And *you?*

Enter MUGGLES *suddenly, door* L 2 E.

MUG. (L). Look here, Mr Gilroy, what's the meaning of all this 'ere? None of your counsellor's airs *here*. Guv'nor, don't you stand no bullying. Mr Gilroy, you aint at the Old Bailey, you know.

TOM. (L C). No. Take care *you're* not there before you're aware of it. As you've listened at the door, I needn't repeat my remarks. Your master's supposed to be a married man.

MUG. Well, who says he aint?

TOM. *I* do.

MERV. Tom!

FANNY. Tom, dear!

MUG. Ha! ha! '*Tom, dear.*' 'Familirallity breeds *contemp.*' Hem! *Doctor Watts.*

TOM. Ha! Cornwall's a pleasant county, isn't it?

MERV. Eh?

MUG. What?

TOM. Good, secret, retired, out of the way, 'ostrich in the sand,' 'fly in the amber,' 'needle in a bottle of hay,' 'toad in

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the hole,' sort of locality, eh, Muggles? Capital county for concealing yourself from your creditors, sort of place where you can live and die without causing any particular remark, first rate place for human flowers to be 'born, and blush unseen,' for 'mute inglorious Miltons,' &c., &c.; and above all other advantages a specially admirable neighbourhood wherein to *hide a wife*.

FANNY. Eh?

MERV. (*aside*). Oh, law!

(*Goes up, sits* L *of table.*)

MUG. Well, if *I* had a wife as wanted a hiding, I shouldn't be partic'ler as to the *neighbourhood*.

FANNY (*rises and comes forward* R C). But, Tom, what does all this mean?

MUG. (*blusteringly*). I tell you what it means. Mr Gilroy thinks he's got 'old of something.

TOM. Something and *somebody*.

(FANNY *sits again up* R C.)

MUG. Eh?

MERV. Some—somebody, Tom?

TOM. Mr Muggles, did you ever hear of a party of the name of—a—name of *Goppinger*?

MUG. (*staggering. Aside*). It *was* 'im. I took him for a *loosifer naturee*, but it was *'im*, and there's nothing for it now but bluster. (*Aloud*). He—hem? Ya—ah, I knew a vagabond of that name. He was transported for a forgery, and—and—

TOM. Has returned.

Enter from door L 2 E, GOPPINGER. *a scrubby, grubby, grey muzzled old man, with bent back, and general appearance of dilapidation, a lawyer's blue bag in his hand. He comes slowly* R H *of* TOM—MUGGLES *being on* TOM'S L.

MERV. Goppinger? Goppinger? I never heard the name.

TOM. That's remarkable, considering you married his wife.

MERV. What, sir?

FANNY. Tom, dear!

MUG. (*with a strong effort to master his alarm*). Ha! ha! we're a having a lark, *we* are. Mr Mervyn, my master here, suttingly did marry, and I'm prepared to swear as he—(*sees* GOPPINGER, *who is now down* R *of* TOM. PICTURE.) Hottiwell Goppinger!

GOP. The very identical flute.

MUG. Why aint you in Australia?

GOP. Why aint *you*?

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MUG. It's the land of your retreat—leastways your adoption.

GOP. Gove'nment thinks I'm old enough to leave *off* being adopted, and as I aint killed no warders, though opportoonities was noomerous and irritation continooal, and conducted myself in general first class, why, I've got my ticket of leave. Next time I visits the colonies, David Muggles, (*with concentrated fierceness*), it won't be for *forgery*, and it won't be on your *evidence*, old pal. (*Threatens* MUGGLES. TOM *puts him back.* MERVYN *rises and comes forward* C). He turned agin me, but you won't do so *again*, Davy. So, no sooner was my back turned, and you thought my cough was a settler, than you egged on your soft 'arted guv'nor here to marry my wife, eh, Davy Muggles, eh? (*Half rushing at him.*)

MERV. (*excitedly*, R C). What do you say, man? Do you mean to say that *you—you—*

TOM. Ha! ha! ha! Goppinger isn't inviting to *look* at, but he's—

MERV. I should think he *was*. (*Shakes* GOPPINGER *by the hand*). Go on, my dear sir, go on.

GOP. (*to* MERVYN). David there knew when you married buxom Kitty Larchmore, as her real name was Goppinger, and her 'usband living at the time. Fact was he knew you was as soft as—

MERV. That'll do, sir, that'll do. (GOPPINGER *goes up and cross to* L *near door. To* MUGGLES). So the shameful thraldom in which you have held me all the years, you ungrateful scoundrel— (X *to* C *to* TOM). I *may* call him a scoundrel, eh, Tom?

TOM. No; you mayn't, but I should.

MERV. Was simply—simply—(*Goes and sits* L *of table.*)

MUG. Cease wituperation. I'm not wanted here, so I shall—

TOM. Before you go you'll give up your books and account for no end of things, Mr Muggles. This gentleman here was the mysterious correspondent who cautioned me to keep my eye on Muggles, *he's* been doing so for some time; you see it's a little matter of revenge with him.

MUG. All my fond 'opes vanished. The Dog and Duck, the private *haspiration* of years kollopsed—turned, as the poet haves it, 'into thin *hair*, and what seemed like a corporal, melted.' Hem! Bard of Evans.

GOP. (L). Come along, old pal. I'll look after you. I'll *never* leave you.

(GOPPINGER *links him with his arm, and leads him, sticking close to him.* MUGGLES' *legs limp, and his general appearance crestfallen. At the door he turns, but catching* TOM'S *eye—as in* ACT I.—*collapses, and exits door* L 2 E.)

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MERV. I can scarcely believe my eyes and ears, and I—

Enter PRISCILLA *and* EMILY *and* ERNEST *quickly from door* R 2 E.

PRIS. (R C). What is this? Miss Smith not gone yet?

FANNY (*rises and comes down* C). No. And strange as it may appear, Miss Smith doesn't mean to go. Emily, dear—

EMILY (R *corner*). Shameless young woman, don't *look* at me.

PRIS. Learn, young woman, that the object of your indelicate attacks is *not* the catch you imagined. He is ruined.

FANNY. Possibly *I* may be able to avert the calamity. *I* possess a little property.

TOM (*aside*). Halloa!

EMILY. Keep it, madam. We'll all starve together rather than owe anything to a person who—who—

FANNY. Gracious me! what have I done so dreadful? Mayn't a wife embrace her husband?

MERV. *rises and comes down* L.

EMILY. Don't know. I never had one. Besides, poor old dear, he's not your husband *yet*.

FANNY. Explanations are tedious things, but sometimes indispensable. Hear! (*Oracularly*). Once on a time—

MERV. } Oh, law!
PRIS. }

FANNY (*resolutely*). Once on a time—

TOM (L C). That's *twice* on a time—go on.

FANNY (*goes to* TOM). You're more used to this sort of thing, so perhaps *you* will—(*sits up* L C.)

MERVYN *seated down* L. PRISCILLA *at* R *corner of table.* EMILY *next to her.* ERNEST R.

TOM *goes at back of chair* L *of table.* (*In a barrister fashion*). It seems, my lud, that a certain relative of the plaintiff left a somewhat ridiculous clause in his will, forbidding his heir to marry before a certain age, without an elderly relative's consent. The heir in question *did* marry.

PRIS. (*excited*). No! Impossible! It's not the fact! I—

FANNY (*rising in the manner of the court usher*). Si-lence. (*Sits again.*)

TOM. But concealed the fact; and after having separated

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from his wife on a question of wounded pride, being naturally a—a—

FANNY. Obstinate.

TOM. I'm obliged to my learned friend for the adjective—'obstinate,' but they met by accident five years after at the house of the elderly relative in question.

MERV. What!

PRIS. Thomas'!

EMILY. Tom!

FANNY (*rises, comes forward a little. With legal air*). A—Brother Gilroy will permit me to add that the wife, feeling her property an encumbrance (*seriously*) and a bar to her domestic happiness, wrote only this very day, in fact less than half an hour back, to her man of business in London, instructing him to sell out everything without delay, and place the entire sum realized at the disposal of her new found cousin, Mr Mervyn, (*comes and takes* MERVYN'S *hand, then back to* TOM), so that her husband may come back to her without the slightest pang of wounded pride, and with the knowledge that it will be upon *his* industry, his talent and *success*, that she in future must most properly depend. (*Gives* TOM *her hand.*)

TOM. My darling!

PRIS. (*comes down* R C). Emily, we've been making fools of ourselves. (*Goes up and gets round to* L C.)

EMILY (*coming* R C). Oh, Fanny dear, do please forgive me. You know appearances were so much against you. I thought you were fond of Ernest, and that would have been so very dreadful.

FANNY. Yes, it would.

ERNEST. Thank you.

MERV. (*to* TOM). But I'm in the clouds. (*Puts chair* L.)

TOM. Keep there till we've settled your affairs for you.

MERV. I can't take *her* money. I—

TOM. It *was* hers, then it was mine, and now it's *yours*.

MERV. Never!

TOM. Then you part a loving couple once again. Fanny, farewell for ever. (*Going* L.)

MERV. (*stopping him*). No, no; stop, you impetuous fellow.

FANNY. As we can never be re-united, Tom, good bye, everybody. (*Going* R.)

EMILY (*stopping her*). If you go I'll—I'll never marry Ernest.

ERNEST (*crosses to* R C). Oh, hang it, don't go.

MERV. I don't understand it all, but I'm in your hands And Fanny here—

TOM (*embracing her*). *She's* in my *arms*.

FANNY. Oh, Tom.

ERNEST (*embracing* EMILY). There, I can't help it!

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EMILY (R). How *can* you?

MERV. Confound it, boys, let it go round. (*Embraces* PRISCILLA.)

PRIS. It's all a mystery.

TOM. I'll make it clear.

But first to solve a greater mystery here. (*Indicating audience.*)

Our partnership for life again commences,
We come on you, though, for the law expenses
Paid thus—by note of hand—your answer? Yes.
Then we may count our future a success.

CURTAIN.

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PARTNERS FOR LIFE.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A Drawing Room at a country house.—Window* C *(with curtains) leading on to a small terrace.—The distant view, a rich country Landscape.—Garden elegantly laid out, intervening doors* R *and* L 2 E.

The room to have something more substantial about its appearance than the conventional 'Villa,' but still not quite a large 'Mansiony' appearance.

Ottoman C.—*Piano and Music stool up* L. C.—*Couch* R.—*Chiffoniers, Chairs, Flowers-Stands, &c.*

DARBYSHIRE *enters through window* C., *carrying a cage with a parrot in it.*

DARBY. (*comes* C). 'Pretty Polly' indeed. You never open your mouth but you tell an untruth. First place you arn't pretty, second place, you arn't a Polly; leastways, I never heard of the male sex being called a Polly. Ugh! you ugly wretch, come along to your mistress, *she* appreciates you, and you've had your morning's warm. Ah, *I'd* warm you morning and evening too, if I had *my* way. Come along (*going towards door* R).

Enter EMILY MERVYN, C *from* R.

EMILY (L. C). Where are you going with the bird, Darbyshire?

DARBY. Well, Miss Priscilla says she feels dull, and would like a little amusement, so she's sent for her parrot, and I'm taking him to her in her room. He's thoroughly warmed through now, she has him put out on the terrace in the sun for a bit every day, until he's regular warmed, miss.

EMILY. Put out on the—

DARBY. Yes, miss, parrots is like men, miss—generally get warm when they're 'put out.'

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EMILY. Don't you try to be clever, Darbyshire, it's dangerous.

DARBY. La, miss, I don't *try*, it comes natural. Ha! ha! Father was a wag in his way, miss, you know; never succeeded in consequence. He was always funning and always failing. A stupid fellow as took the business after him succeeded wonderful. But, oh, I forgot the parrot: come along, sir. (*Exit with the cage, door* R 2 E.)

EMILY (*apparently out of temper, sits on ottoman, takes off her gloves, hat, &c*). Aunt Priscilla and her parrot indeed. *She's* happy enough; if she *is* forty-six, or *fifty*-six, or whatever it is. Somewhere a long time off. I wonder what *I* shall be like at forty-six, or sixty-four, or whatever the age is. It don't matter much *what* it is, after *thirty*. And what will Ernest look like *then*. Why, bald headed, and he's too proud to try anything to bring it back. Bah! (*Rises petulantly, flings down her hat and crosses to* R. C.)

Enter ERNEST, C, *from* L.

ERNEST (*half chaffing*). Well, have you got over it?

EMILY (*annoyed, in a very quiet voice*). Got over what?

ERNEST (*coming forward, kneeling on ottoman*). Little—em—little *temper* you know.

EMILY. (R C). Really I—

ERNEST (*quickly*). Just so. Perhaps I was wrong in the term. Let us say *large* temper. There; will that suit you?

EMILY. Ernest, I—(*sits on sofa* R.)

ERNEST (*quickly, but with quietude*). There. Yes, admitted. It does *not* suit you. Fine feathers make fine birds, and the fine plumage of a precious rage don't suit my simple duck, Emily. (*Goes to her on sofa*). An ill temper sits very uneasily upon that clear pale pretty forehead, Emily, and if you could see the wrinkles that rise only too readily at the command of that vixen vexation. Why, you'd think yourself fifty-six if you could only look in the glass.

EMILY (*rising, seriously*). I wish I *could* look in the glass, Ernest, I wish I *could*.

ERNEST (*half jestingly*). Well, what's to prevent you. It won't frighten you.

EMILY. That's according to who would be looking into it *with* me.

ERNEST (*stealing his arm round her*). Well, if it wasn't Darbyshire, who might be doing your hair, it ought in all consciousness to be *me*.

EMILY (*half nestling towards him*). But you'd rather see another face there than mine.

ERNEST. Not Darbyshire's, no.

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EMILY. What about Miss Smith?

ERNEST (*after a slight pause, releases* EMILY—*rises indignantly, walks to* L). Fanny Smith, good heavens, haven't you dropped *that* yet?

EMILY (*rising*). No; I wish *you* would.

ERNEST (*annoyed*). I! I!

EMILY. There! there! Don't keep repeating '*I*,' I'm not *quite* a fool.

ERNEST (*much annoyed*). I don't say you *are*—*quite*.

EMILY (*laughs a little hysterically*). Ha! ha! how clever—how like a friend—a cousin—a *lover*.

ERNEST (*turning sharply*). A what?

EMILY. Oh *I* don't want to tie you down. Go where you please—do *what* you please. Of course our uncles settled we were to be man and wife, and you naturally object to the yoke, very good—(*with a great air of heroism*). I—I release you.

ERNEST (*annoyed, but chaffingly*). Ha! ha! You'd have made a capital actress. I should advise—

EMILY (*now thoroughly enraged*). *You* wouldn't mind *what* I did. You'd wish me to go out as a governess.

ERNEST. Not at all, because you'd inevitably 'go in' again.

EMILY. Eh?

ERNEST. And *not* 'win.'

EMILY. How so, pray?

ERNEST (c). Governesses have to teach a lot of things. *You* don't know a lot of things to teach. Governesses have to *put up* with a lot of things. *You* don't feel disposed to put up with anything. Governesses are obliged to conform to the rules of the house. *You* are not inclined to conform to anything but that particular whim which takes you at the moment, and which long after that moment, Emily, holds you its merest slave. (*Gives the latter part of this with great feeling.*)

EMILY (*hangs her head slightly—short pause*). Perhaps I am wrong, Ernest. I am only a woman—a girl—I may be very foolish, and—

ERNEST (*going to her*). Emily, we are as it were bound together by the capricious will of our uncle which holds over us the one great power, money. I love you; you *know* it. A woman always knows when a man loves her. He has about him two liars—his lips, two truth tellers—his eyes. You *know* I love you, my lips have *told* you so, my eyes have *sworn* it. Had there been great difficulties in the way of our union I should have done all that thew and sinew and a faithful heart could have done to surmount them,—*but*, as fate so wills it, there is no difficulty, everything is plain, straightforward and prosaic, and we (a young romantic pair who think we ought to be separated by almost impassable gulfs, and legal difficulties, and implacable relations), find on the *contrary* that

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everything is settled, fixed, and arranged *for* us. We revolt—only natural—very well. That being the case, I have no further wish to thwart your object, which is apparently Major Billiter, or Sir Archibald Drelincourt.

EMILY (*rising enraged*). What!

ERNEST (*quickly*). Excuse me. You don't mean '*what*,' you mean '*which*.'

EMILY (*breathless*). Objects!

ERNEST. Certainly; I consider them *both* 'objects.'

EMILY. Major Billiter—a—a—a—

ERNEST (*very quietly*). A major.

EMILY. I—I don't even know what a major *is*.

ERNEST. Neither I should imagine, does Billiter, but he *is* one for all that.

EMILY. And—and Sir Archibald Drelincourt—

ERNEST. Baronet. Come, you know what a baronet is. You know what a baronet's *wife* is. She's called 'my lady,' and she likes it.

EMILY. I know you're very cruel. Sir Archibald Drelincourt—

ERNEST. Is a philanthropist—a benefactor of the human race. With him everybody is a man and a brother; only it's the *younger* brother, who gets nothing. He's the most generous man in the world, if you take him upon trust, which of course one *would*, for nobody'd *pay* for him; though I'm bound to say he'd let 'em if they offered. He's wonderfully partial to savages is Sir Archibald—a—at a *distance*. He likes them a long way off. Savages round the corner in the courts and alleys and unwholesome dens he's *not* so partial to.

EMILY. He's partial to aunt Priscilla, you know that. So is the major. *She's* the attraction here.

ERNEST. Her money *may* be, not herself. It's a case of 'metal more attractive,' especially with the philanthropic one.

(MERVYN'S *and* PRISCILLA'S *voices heard off* R.)

EMILY. She's here—you might show *some* sense of propriety I think, but young men—

ERNEST. Are not so immaculate as baronets and majors (*annoyed, rises and goes up* R.)

EMILY (*goes up to window.*)

Enter MERVYN, *a well-preserved elderly gentleman, and* MISS PRISCILLA, *an old maid affecting youthful manners.*

PRISC. (R C). Well you may say what you please. I repeat, you may say what you please.

MERV. (L C). No need to repeat it. I always *do*.

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Prisc. You *do*, and not invariably in the pleasantest way.

Merv. I'm my own master here, I believe, at least I *try* to be,—not always so easy either.

Prisc. Your own master—your butler Muggles is master here. *He* seems to me the chief authority.

Merv. (*annoyed*). Not at all, not at all. Mr Muggles is an old and attached domestic, and a—a—I presume he always treats you with respect.

Prisc. (*drawing herself up*). Everybody does *that*, Horace, everybody. If *not* it would be—would be—

Merv. Worse for everybody. Just so; but I must request you *not* to repeat your foolish remarks concerning Miss Smith, a charming young lady who does us the honour to visit us as Emily's friend. You have annoyed me greatly by your observations.

Prisc. My *observation* you mean. I've watched her closely, and I'm correct. I'm perfectly correct.

Merv. Good Heavens! who ever said you were *not?*

Prisc. Don't be coarse, Horace. Miss Smith is an impostor. (*Sits on sofa* R, *and begins her wool work.*)

Merv. Ha! ha! has she imposed on *you?*

Prisc. Nobody ever imposes on *me*; I'm too deep.

Merv. (*drily*). You *are*, much.

Prisc. In the first place she pretends she's only twenty-three.

Merv. Well she doesn't look *that.*

Prisc. Ah, you men don't *know* the thousand helps to a youthful appearance women can procure. Why, how old do *I* look?

Merv. Well—a—don't press me.

Ernest (*coming down* R C). You look absurdly young, aunt. Much more youthful than you *are*, you know.

Prisc. This *charming* young lady, as you term her is not the artless girl you take her for. See how she makes eyes at our visitors.

Merv. I'd sooner see her make eyes than *eyebrows.*

Emily (*up* R C). Hear! hear! uncle. I hate people who are always '*making up.*'

Ernest (*up* L C). That's true. *Making up* indeed—you prefer continuing *to quarrel.*

Emily (*at him*). Ugh!

Ernest (*mocking her*). Ugh!

They persistently refuse to look at one another.

Merv. Priscilla Mervyn, not another word against a lady who is accepting the hospitality of Mervyn House.

Prisc. And whose master is her ardent admirer.

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MERV. (*calmly*). Precisely—I am so—I glory in it.

PRISC. Ha! ha! he glories in it.

ERNEST (*coming forward* R C). So do I!

MERV. (*turning*). You.

EMILY (*up* L C). Oh, dear, didn't you know that. (*With an air of saying something cutting*). *I'm* going to meet cousin Tom—dear Tom. How delighted I shall to see him. He was always *devoted* to *me*.

ERNEST Was he?

EMILY. Yes, he was. (*Exit* C *and* R.)

ERNEST. Phew! Temper, thy name is Emily! Of course we *all*—we *men* at least, admire Miss Smith.

MERV. (*a little annoyed*). You're a *boy*, sir, a stripling. You've no business to admire *anything* but boating and cricket, and a—all that sort of thing. Now, when a man reaches my time of life.

ERNEST (*unabashed*). Why, uncle, I do believe you're a trifle 'cut.'

MERV. *Cut*, did you say, sir?

ERNEST. The least bit *gone*, you know.

MERV. *Cut*! *Gone*! Hang it, sir, don't speak of your uncle as if he were a cheese. Save your slang for the *ladies—they* don't mind it; I *do;* but then I am, or *hope* I am a gentleman. Times have changed, young man, but in my younger days it was not considered desirable to select one's choicest phrases from the vocabulary of costermongers. (*Retires up* L *dignified.*)

ERNEST. Very pretty sentiment, but won't bear inspection. You—*you* know better what was in vogue in *his* younger days, eh, aunt?

PRISC. (*indignant*). Certainly *not*. You forget my age, I think.

ERNEST (*half aside*). Do I. Ha! ha! so do *you*.

EMILY *and* TOM GILROY *heard talking and laughing.*

MERV. Ha, here's Tom Gilroy at last; behind his time, but better late than never. (*Goes up to meet him.*)

Enter TOM GILROY C *from* R, *with* EMILY *leaning on his arm.*

MERV. (*up* L C). How are you, dear boy? welcome!

TOM (*up* C). How are you cousin, Corney, looking splendid! (*Coming forward* R C). Ha, Priscilla; no, I must have a cousin's privilege. (*Kisses her*). Well, Ernest, old man. (*Shakes hands with him.*)

ERNEST (*up* R C., *aside biliously*). I wonder if he kissed Emily; she looks as if he had. She's got a sort of 'kissed' expression about her.

PRISC. (*down* R, *aside*). What a splendid figure he has.

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And what a distinguished air. But perhaps he's engaged. (*Sighs*). People now rush into matrimony so ridiculously young.

MERV. (*down* L C). Well, Tom, we're delighted to have you amongst us again.

PRISC. (R). That we *are*.

TOM (C). And I'm delighted to be amongst you once more. Why, it's ever so long since I was here. How you're grown Emily, and you too, Ernest, though you mayn't think it. Ah, *you* haven't grown cousin Corney.

MERV. (*uneasily*). No, no—I—a—I don't do that sort of thing. (*Aside*). All these legal fellows are so personal.

TOM. And as for my cousin Priscilla, here—

MERV. Well, hang it, *she* hasn't grown has she?

TOM. Yes, she has grown younger than ever, that comes of possessing a good figure. What I always say is, Never mind the face, give me a figure. The latter lasts, whilst features are ephemeral. Anybody staying here? I know hospitality is your forte?

MERV. Why, yes—that is—(*uneasily*)—only a lady—a young lady—a friend of Emily's—a Miss Smith.

TOM (C). Ah. Fine only old family the Smith's, only fault want concentration, much too broadcast, meet 'em everywhere; still it's a good travelling name. Sort of india-rubber appellation, like your expanding dressing bag. Take it simply, S M I T H, humble, unpretending, respectable, and short. Ties you to nothing, and envelopes you in a cloak of insignificancy beneath the folds of which nobody cares to peer. Knock out your *I*, and substitute Y, and you become of another stock, whilst the addition of a final E really almost removes you into an *aristocratic* region. You may *then* positively be *somebody*. Shake up the letters and come out as Schmidt; why its next door but one to a second-hand Bismarck. Never *was* such a good name invented. Jones runs it hard, and Brown makes a decent third, but Smith secures the stakes as certain as my name's Gilroy. (*Goes up* L, *talks to* ERNEST.)

MERV. (*has been staring blankly at* TOM'S *fluency—Takes a pinch of snuff. Aside*). Phew! He was quite right to go to the bar. (*Looks at him*). He's a fine tall fellow, he's taller than *I* am. A run-to-seed sort of figure *I* call it, but no doubt I'm prejudiced. Miss Smith's shortish. Perhaps she'll admire Tom because he's tall. Perhaps he'll admire *her* because she's short. Still, he don't admire *me*, and *I'm* short. Oh, rubbish, he *mustn't* admire her. Besides, ha! ha! he can't marry without my consent, thanks to eccentric uncle Bernard's will. I've got him under my thumb, safe—safe as—Ha, Muggles.

Enter MUGGLES, L *door, with a parcel of letters—He is dressed*

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*ack clothes, has a sleeky appearance and hang-dog look he cannot thoroughly disguise—*MERVYN *is uneasy under* MUGGLE'S *glance, and fidgetty in his presence.*

MUG. (*goes to* MERVYN; *aside to him*). Under your thumb, sir, was you a saying, ha! ha! Funny expression that for *you*, sir, aint it. Letters for Mr Gilroy. (*Goes up to* R C.)

TOM (*comes down a little, takes them and goes up* R C *opening them.*)

MERV. (*aside, a little agitated*). Shall I *ever* be relieved of this persecution?

MUG. (C *beside him*). An answer's wanted about that oss.

MERV. (*haughtily*). That *what*?

MUG. Oss. Oss. You aint a-going deaf, *are* you, sir?

MERV. Oh, *horse*?

MUG. Just so. The *h*introduction of the 'haspirit' don't alter the price. Mr Latimer's coachman and me's old acquaintances—party by the name of Wogg—and whatever Wogg says, *I* swear to.

MERV. And what *does* Wogg say?

MUG. Wogg says a hundred-and-thirty.

MERV. A hundred-and-thirty pounds for that cream-coloured cob.

MUG. Look at the colour, so out-of-the-way.

MERV. Out-of-the-way. So's the price.

MUG. *And* its description—*C*ream *C*oloured *C*ob—three K's altogether.

MERV. I can't afford it—and I—a—a—I *won't*!

MUG. (*with his finger raised*). *Eh!*

MERV. (*wincing*). I say I really can*not* afford it.

MUG. But I've given my word of *h*onour to Wogg—I may say I'm *pledged* to Wogg. And though he's a very nice man, and he thinks me the same, I'm afraid if I go off the bargain, he's the sort of party to sink all pussonal feeling and punch my *yead*! Turn it over in your mind—hem! if there's room. (*They go up* L *talking.*)

TOM (*up* R C, *aside to* ERNEST). This is most remarkable and ridiculous. (*Reads from letter*). 'Keep your eyes on Muggles.' That's the second time since yesterday, I have received this mysterious piece of advice.

ERNEST (*up* R). Excellent counsel. He's an awful scoundrel.

TOM. How do you know?

ERNEST. *Don't* know, only I'm certain.

TOM. Quite right. Never bother about reasons, always make up your mind as you *have* done. Saves a world of trouble. (*Fixing his glass in his eye, stares hard at* MUGGLES.)

MUG. (*to* MERVYN). I say you're wrong, and if *I* say you're wrong, you *are* wrong. There.

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A HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS.

An Original Comedy,

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

HENRY J. BYRON,

AUTHOR OF

War to the Knife; The Old Story; Dundreary Married and Done For; Cinderella; Blue Beard from a New Point of Hue; Robinson Crusoe; Little Don Giovanni; Mazeppa; The Maid and the Magpie, or the Fatal Spoon; The Babes in the Wood; Bride of Abydos; Fra Diavolo; Jack the Giant Killer; Very Latest Edition of the Lady of Lyons; The Nymph of the Lurleyberg; Pilgrim of Love; The Garibaldi Excursionists; Aladdin, or the Wonderful Scamp; Esmeralda, or the Sensation Goat; Goldenhair the Good; Ivanhoe in Accordance, etc.; Beauty and the Beast; Rival Othellos; Whittington and his Cat; Puss in a New Pair of Boots; Miss Eily O'Connor; George de Barnwell; Our Sea-side Lodgings; The Rosebud of Stinging-nettle Farm; The Sensation Fork; My Wife and I; Beautiful Haidee, or the Sea Nymph and the Sallee Rovers; Ill Treated Il Trovatore; The Motto: "I am all there!" St. George and the Dragon; Lady Belle Belle; Orpheus and Eurydice, or the Young Gentleman who charmed the Rocks; 1863, or the Sensations of the Past Year; Mazourka, or the Stick, the Pole, and the Tartar; The "Grin" Bushes; Lion and the Unicorn; Sensation Dramas for the Back Drawing Room; Princess Springtime, or the Envoy that Stole the King's Daughter; La! Sonnambula! or the Supper, the Sleeper, and the Merry Swiss Boy; Pan; Lucia di Lammermoor; Der Freischutz, or the Belle, the Bill, and the Ball; Pandora's Box; William Tell with a Vengeance; The Lancashire Lass; &c., &c.

PART AUTHOR OF

The Miller and his Men; Valentine and Orson; & Forty Thieves (Savage Club).

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SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
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A HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS.

First performed at the Prince of Wales Theatre (under the management of Miss Marie Wilton), on Saturday, the 5th of May, 1866.

Characters.

GERALD GOODWIN	Mr. S. Bancroft.	
MAJOR BLACKSHAW	„ F. Dewar.	
SIR RUMSEY WATERS	„ J. Tindall.	
CHARKER	„ Trafford.	
JOE BARLOW	„ Ray.	
PENNYTHORNE	„ J. Clarke.	
PYEFINCH	„ W. H. Montgomery.	
MR. FLUKER	„ J. Hare.	
GIBBONS	„	
ALICE BARLOW	Miss Wilton.	
MRS. BARLOW	„ Larkin.	
ARABELLA BELL	„ B. Wilton.	
JANE PLOVER	„ B. Goodall.	

Costumes of the Day.

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A HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Parlour behind Joe Barlow's shop, comfortably furnished—door into shop,* L. C.; *door,* R., *fire-place,* L.

MRS. BARLOW *discovered sitting,* R. C., *darning stockings, receiving the visit of* MISS JANE PLOVER *and* MISS ARABELLA PELL, *two tradesmen's daughters.*

MRS. BARLOW. (R. C.) Well, my dears, if you were to talk for an hour, you'd never make me think different. Besides, marriage indeed! what business have two young bits of gals like you to think of getting married?

JANE. (L. C.) La, Mrs. Barlow, what do you suppose we've got to think about?

MRS. B. Oh, go along with you.

JANE. I dare say you did, when you were our age. It's only natural, isn't it, Arabella?

ARABELLA. (L.—*a gushing girl*) Of course it is, Jane dear.

MRS. B. Parcel of rubbish. Now you, Jane Plover, now what do you know about housekeeping?

JANE. Well, I can make my own bonnets, can't I, Arabella?

ARAB. Yes, Jane dear.

MRS. B. How about cooking now?

JANE. Oh, when I marry I hope it'll be to some one who can afford to keep me a cook. One marries to better one's condition, Mrs. Barlow, not to be made a negro slave of.

ARAB. I should think not indeed! catch me cooking for any man.

MRS. B. Well, my niece Alice can cook.

JANE. Now you know it's not fair to bring Alice forward as an example. Alice can do everything better than anybody else.

ARAB. Yes, everything!

JANE. Every one owns that, and nobody's a bit jealous of her. I always will say, that if ever there was a loveable, amiable, downright specimen of a girl, Alice Barlow is the identical party, don't I, Arabella?

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ARAB. That you do, Jane dear.

MRS. B. Ah, you wheedling young thing, you know how to get round an old woman, not as anything you could say in Ally's praise would be too much; ever since she was so high, she's been a joy and a comfort to her uncle and me.

JANE. Well, Mrs. Barlow, in course of time she'll have to be a joy and comfort to somebody else; it's only natural, you know. As Mrs. Mc Whirter, who gave that lovely lecture at the school-room, last week, on "Woman's Rights," said, with a beautiful sweep of the arm, "Matrimony," says she, "Matrimony is woman's *missive!*"

ARAB. *Mission*, not missive, Jane dear.

JANE. Don't catch me up, Arabella, I was close to the lecturer, in the shilling seats, whilst you was at the back, among the "threepennys."

ARAB. That's a bad habit of yours, lording it over parties who haven't a proper allowance from their pa. It isn't every one's pa who's a master builder, and made his fortune running up terraces, that look as if they'd been built of card paper instead of bricks and mortar.

JANE. Now, Arabella, don't you be annoying.

ARAB. Then don't you aggravate.

MRS. B. There, there, don't quarrel, girls; woman's missionary or not, Alice isn't thinking of marriage.

JANE. Not as far as you know, Mrs. Barlow.

ARAB. By the way, how's your lodger getting on, ma'am?

MRS. B. That's best known to himself, my dear.

ARAB. And he keeps himself to himself, I fancy. I call him a regular mystery. But he's very handsome, isn't he, Jane dear?

JANE. Bless the man! do you think I ever looked at him?

ARAB. There's no harm in expressing an opinion; it isn't every one who's engaged to a cornchandler.

JANE. (*looking at her watch*) Gracious me, Mrs. Barlow, how late it is, we must be off.

ARAB. No, and it isn't every one who has a gold watch to flaunt in the faces of parties whose parents have been improvident. I'll warrant Alice hasn't got a gold watch.

MRS. B. Indeed she has though; her uncle gave her a beauty on her last birthday.

JANE. Besides, don't you know Alice has a fortune coming to her, hasn't she, Mrs. Barlow?

MRS. B. She don't like it talked about; it's no secret that her father left her comfortably off. But, bless my heart, what can have become of Joe? (*the girls get up*).

ARAB. I suppose you'd think it rude if I was to ask what your lodger is, Mrs. Barlow.

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JANE. Arabella, how you ca,. ——

MRS. B. Not a bit, my dear, when you see him ask him.

ARAB. La, no, I meant that perhaps you might——

MRS. B. *crossly* I know nothing about him. Where can Joe be?

JANE. Well, good morning, Mrs. Barlow; give my love to Alice. (*shaking hands*)

ARAB. And mine too, and a million million kisses. (*shaking hands*)

JANE. How can you be so childish?

ARAB. Do mind your own business, Jane dear.

JANE. It's quite ridiculous in one of your years.

ARAB. Never mind what it is. (*they go off*, L.D., *wrangling*)

MRS. B. Bless the man, what a time he is always going into the City. Bother the City, why can't he be happy in the Boro.' It's only of late that he's taken to rambling off goodness knows where. Joe never spoke a false word to me in his life, but I must say there are times when I mistrust that "City." Half-past four. (*sits and taps her foot impatiently*) Dear! dear! and there's always a rush of business when he's away, customers seem to pour in just out of aggravation. (*sits*, R., *arm chair*)

Enter JOE BARLOW, C. D.

JOE. Well, old woman. (*observes that* MRS. BARLOW *is annoyed, winks aside*) A trifle grumpy as per usual. Humh. (*aloud*) What's the matter, misses?

MRS. B. Oh, what a time you've been philandrin' about.

JOE. What's the use of going into foreign languages? I ain't been a philandrin,' I've been in the City.

MRS. B. Oh, you're always going to the City.

JOE. Well, it ain't my fault, old woman. It's business. If every one was blown up for being obliged to go into the City it'd come precious hard on a many. Wouldn't the homnibuses catch it, that's all. (*aside*) Twelve per cent. if it's a penny. If she only knew half—but no, she'd object to the risk—she's like the party in the play, "she's got no speckelation in her eye." Twelve per cent. if it's a penny, (*turns up stage and takes off his hat*, &c.)

MRS. B. (R. C.) Been buying stock I suppose?

JOE. (L. C.) Ye—es, a little. We're short of soda too. (JOE *puts hat on piano*, L., *and they sit*)

MRS. B. We'll give the City a rest for a bit, Joe, for we've got more in the place than we shall ever get rid of. There's soap enough to see *us* out if we live to be a pair of Methoosallems.

JOE. Well, there's Alice to inherit it, ain't there?

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MRS. B. Ah, Alice will never keep the shop, Joe.

JOE. Why not? she's got no lofty ideas, has she? What would you have her do? sell up the business and set up for a fine lady, or take to something light and gen-teel, millinery or something of that sort; or go out for a governess, eh? That's a very agreeable sort of life I've heard, and the number of young nobleman as frequently proposes and is accepted is quite surprising.

MRS. B. (*much annoyed*) Now, Joe, Joe, don't nag—you know I can't stand nagging, Joe. I don't want to appear out of temper.

JOE. *Out* of temper, old woman! no fear of your being out of it, you'll always have plenty of it by you.

MRS. B. There, that's always the way you come back from the City; you go out quite pleasant, and you come back that rampageous there's no speaking to you. Oh I'd like to give that City a bit of my mind. (*rises*)

JOE. Oh, my dear. the City don't want it. (*rises*)

MRS. B. Alice has no notion of marrying a young nobleman, or above herself in any way. Look at Pennythorne, what a match he'd be, but she'll scarcely give him a civil word, more especially of late—hem! I say more especially of late, Joe. I say more especially——

JOE. All right, my dear, I hear you. Don't let's have no tautology. If Alice don't like Pennythorne she's not obliged to have him I suppose. I'm a advocate for letting young people fall in love *before* they get married. It's better than doing it afterwards.

MRS. B. Don't be stupid, Joe; it's according to who it's with. Esteem is the principal thing.

JOE. No, it aint, love's the sentiment for my money. Bless your heart, when I proposed to you, old woman, I didn't esteem you a bit. But I was over head and ears in love with you in the good old fashioned way, and felt miserable, and kep' awake and didn't put no oil on my hair, lost my appetite all reg'ler.

MRS. B. (*rather pleased*) Oh, go along with your nonsense! Pennythorne's rich. Look at the horses and carriages he keeps.

JOE. Yes, to "Let out for 'ire,"—put that in.

MRS. B. She'd have got to like him in time, only there's a certain reason why she doesn't now.

JOE. Oh, the reason's plain enough—she detests him. I'm afraid it's one that'll last.

MRS. B. Yes, but I believe you're so blind that you don't or won't see the real cause.

JOE. Now look here, don't keep a driving about the bush; if you've got anything to communicate, speak up.

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MRS. B. It was an evil day when you allowed that young man Goodwin to come here and lodge.

JOE. (*whistles*) Oh, well, you made no objection. The room was no use to us; and—and—why I thought you were very partial to the young man.

MRS. B. Oh yes, at first; but—but he's very strange. I don't understand him; and—and he's dreadfully shabby.

JOE. Shabby? why he's always paid his rent regler, and William tells me he's given him a shilling a week for cleaning his boots.

MRS. B. Used to do. Now he cleans them himself.

JOE. Does 'em better, perhaps.

MRS. B. No, it's because he's ashamed to shew 'em. I've noticed his clothes getting more and more threadbare. He's as poor as poor can be, Joe.

JOE. Well, I don't suppose he'd select a back bed room in the Borough if he was rolling in wealth. You don't expect to have lords for lodgers, do you?

MRS. B. What convinces me more than anything is, that I've lately missed his watch and chain.

JOE. Well, my dear, so long as you don't miss *yours* it don't signify.

MRS. B. Then I've seen him go out in the dark with parcels and come back without 'em; that looks suspicious.

JOE. On the contrary, if he had gone *out* with nothing and come *back* with parcels, it might have appeared odd.

MRS. B. Besides, I believe he's half starved; why he's nothing like as stout as he was when he came here, and looks as pale——

JOE. Ha, it's not the colour of his face, it's the colour of his money you're afraid of missing. As for being thin, p'raps he's a going in for Bantum. I'm sorry to hear all this; but still I can't see that it's our business; the young man's never asked a favour or borrowed a penny of us, has he?

MRS. B. No, he's as proud as he can be; and the poorer he grows the more distant he gets. That's what annoys me more than all. If he'd come down a bit humble in his way it would only look proper, I think. I don't believe in paupers a giving themselves airs.

JOE. Come, come, I say, you're a going a little too far. Pauper's a hard word.

MRS. B. Well; never mind, Joe. I shall have him out. He'd better go before there's any bother. Suppose anything should happen—him took ill—and not a penny. Don't you see what a nice set out it would be for us? Haven't you got a head on your shoulders?

JOE. Yes, but I believe I've got a heart in it as well.

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So have you, old woman, and his being poor's not the reason for all this. What was the hint you dropped just now about Alice?

MRS. B. Well, ever since that young man's been here, she's been like another girl. His fine genteel haughty ways turned her head. I can see as far as most, Joe.

JOE. Yes, you can see a great deal further than other folks, and sometimes a good deal more. I've had many a talk with Mr. Goodwin, and though he's a little shy, I believe he's an honest young gentleman—aye, gentleman! As for Alice, I can depend on her, my dear. She'll never cause us a tear. I could trust her anywhere and with anybody—always could; I think any one will allow that, when I declare that at the early age of five I could leave her alone with the figs.

MRS. B. Well, I shall turn him out! (*rising*)

JOE. (*rising*) Where? Into the cruel streets, and him without a friend. You're comfortable off, my dear, and don't know what it is to want a meal; but I was a poor lad once, Sue—a poor lad with no home, and no friends. I've known what it is to drop from sheer hunger, and sob myself to sleep against a door step. It was many a long year before I could count upon a dinner every day. And I might have been a thief. I was very, very near it once, but a friend's hand saved me from that, just in time, and—and—I'll be this young man's friend, and, (*turning to her*) so will you, old woman, so will you, won't you? Eh, won't you? Eh? (*he has got closer to her and puts his arm round her waist.—she is gradually giving way*)

MRS. B. (*half crying*) There, there, have it your own way. I only meant it for the best, Joe.

JOE. Bless your dear good heart, I know that. There—there—I'll have a talk with Alice. There—there—we won't turn out the poor lad into the streets.

GOODWIN *appears at door*, R., *pauses*.

MRS. B. (*going, and wiping her eyes*) Oh, Joe, Joe, what a good soul you are, only—only——

JOE. Yes.

MRS. B. Only——

JOE. Well?

MRS. B. I wish you wouldn't go so often to the City.

Exit MRS. BARLOW *into shop*, C. *door*.

JOE. Hah, she'd never do anything harsh if it came to the point, I know. She's always getting hold of some mare's nest or other; but if she knew I'd been investing my savings in a glorious concern that must yield twelve per cent., if it pays a penny, she'd jump at it.

MRS. B. (*from shop, sharply*) Joe!

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JOE. There she is. (*looks over blind into shop*) Yes, strugg. with a double Gloster. (*calls, going*) I can't have that chees cut for less than a pound mind. It's a first-rate cheese that is, and—— *Goes off, talking, C. door.*

Enter GERALD GOODWIN, R. D., *and sits in arm chair*, R.—*he is in the last depths of genteel shabbiness—his boots cracked, and his coat very threadbare.*

GERALD. You're quite right, my good Mrs. Barlow, it's time for me to go. I ought to have vacated my highly savoury apartment before this. Heigho! I may try to laugh it off, but it's no joke being next door but one from starving after all. Nature abhors a vacuum. I perfectly agree with nature. I little thought when I used to write down in my copy book that undeniable fact, "Hunger's a sharp Thorn," that I should ever come to feel its point. Did I do rightly in quarrelling with Uncle Desborough—quitting his society—leaving India, and coming to England to seek my fortune, unaided? Well, ye-es, I think I did. It's true I threw away all chance of inheriting his money; but then as he chose to marry again, my prospects were destroyed already. There's sure to be a family, (*rises*) there always is in these cases. But one thing's quite certain—honour, common honesty even demands that I should leave this house. I'll go and see if I can find something even more moderate than my present abode.

Enter ALICE, R. D.

Good morning, Miss Barlow.

ALICE. (R.) You are surely not going out, Mr. Goodwin, it's pouring with rain.

GERALD. (L.) Is it! dear me. I assure you I've no objection to rain. I rather like rain. Rain, I believe, is—a—good for the crops.

ALICE. Yes, but as you don't happen to be the crops, wouldn't it be better if you waited till it was over, or took uncle's umbrella?

GERALD. Oh dear, no, thank you. (*aside*) I might be able to stand the rain, but I couldn't survive Mr. Barlow's umbrella. (*aloud*) As you say, I think it would be better to postpone going out for the present. (*puts down hat*) I was only going out to seek some other apartments. I—I am going to leave here. (*uncomfortably*)

ALICE. (R., *suddenly*) Oh! (*a slight pause*) I'm so sorry, if there's anything—not exactly——

GERALD. (L.) Pray don't misunderstand me. I must speak out, and I can do so better to you than to any one else here.

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I—I am uncommonly poor, and I don't see any prospect at present of obtaining a living, and so I'm—I'm going away.

ALICE. But it appears so strange—you seem so clever, and to know so much, and yet——

GERALD. And yet I can't get any employment, that's what you mean. Exactly.

ALICE. Don't mind my being frank. I assure you I take an int—— (*stops abruptly*)

GERALD. Mind your being frank! it's most kind of you to listen to my selfish complainings. It's a great relief to have some one to confide in. You were going to say——

ALICE. (R.) Well, one would imagine that a perfect gentleman——

GERALD. (L.) My dear Alice—I beg your pardon—Miss Barlow, it's astonishing in these cases how difficult "a perfect gentleman" always finds it to gain his bread. Now there's that Pennythorne, a monster of vulgarity——

ALICE. (*with fervour*) So I say.

GERALD. (*aside*) That's hearty.

ALICE. And yet he will come continually, when he knows his attentions are nauseous to me.

GERALD. (*surprised*) Attentions? You don't mean to say he presumes to——

ALICE. He does though, and it's breaking my heart.

GERALD. (*aside*) What's this? How is it that I feel a sudden longing to seize Pennythorne by the collar and shake the life out of him? (*with concentrated rage*) I—I—a—I wonder if it's left off raining. (*just turning up a little*)

ALICE. But it's absurd of my mentioning my troubles to you.

GERALD. On the contrary, after the generous interest you have shewn for my impoverished condition, it would be strange indeed if I didn't exhibit some sympathy for your troubles. Confide in me—tell me all about it.

ALICE. Well, though he must perceive that his attentions are unwelcome, he persecutes me——

GERALD. Persecutes you, Alice—excuse me, I'm carried away by my feelings, and I can't call you Barlow. If the scoundrel dare——

ALICE. Oh, hush! hush! they'll hear you and——

GERALD. *You* to be sacrificed to such a fellow. You, who—Oh, Alice if I had enough to support a wife, I'd——

ALICE. Gracious! What——

GERALD. I can't go without saying it, but I'll be off directly I've done. I'm a poor devil, and I'm growing fonder of you every day. I've no business to think of you—still less to tell you that I do. But I can't help it. I love you, Alice, and—(ALICE *turns away*). There, there, of course you're offended.

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I know it's wrong of me. Perhaps if I'd been able to say this under happier circumstances you might have—but as it is, it's absurd, of course. Good bye. Shake hands, and forget what I've said. I'm very very sorry I've offended you.

ALICE. Offended me.

GERALD. What—not vexed with me? Give me your hand, then. (*holding his hand out—she takes it*)

ALICE. It's yours to keep, if you like

GERALD. Oh, you blessed girl! (*clasps her in his arms*)

JOE BARLOW *enters from shop, unperceived, and looks at them in dismay.*

GERALD. I'm the happiest man in the world, Alice! No more idling, no more complaining, I will get something to do. I shall have some one to work for now, for look you, Alice, I'll never ask your uncle's consent, until I can do so without a blush. I'll not take you from a comfortable home to share my wretched lot.

ALICE. We can wait, Gerald.

GERALD. Then, when I have a fitting home to take you to, I'll come and ask you of him, and not till then. You shall not begin your wedded life by feeling ashamed of your husband, Alice.

JOE. (*coming a little down*) He—hem! (ALICE *breaks away from him, and rushes into her uncle's arms*)

ALICE. (R.) Oh, forgive us, Uncle Joe.

JOE. (C.) Forgive you, my child, what for? I've heard what you've said, Mr. Goodwin, you've spoken like an honest man, and there's my hand, sir. (GERALD *grasps it*) You are a gentleman. Don't think too lightly of the old tradesman's daughter, because you've won her young heart so easily. She's fit to marry a emperor. You'll find respectable employment yet, my lad, and you're both young enough to wait ever so long, and —(*bringing them a little forward*) I—a—*I wouldn't say anything about it at present to Mrs. Barlow.* (*turns up*)

GERALD. I must lose no time now, Alice.

PENNY. (*without*) All right, I'll find her.

JOE. Hallo, here's Pennythorne, *as* usual.

Enter MR. PENNYTHORNE, *he is dressed in a sporting style, and is insufferably snobbish in his general appearance and manner*, L.D., ALICE *sits, arm chair*, R.

JOE. Morning, morning.

PENNY. Holloa, quite a family party, eh! Morning, Miss Alice. (*takes off his hat, bows*) How are you? (*very curtly to* GERALD—*aside*) Alice looks flushed. Been having a row here, it's evident. Thing this fellow, he's always hang[illegible]'s

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reg'larly laid on like the gas. (*aloud*) Well, young gentleman, and how's the world been using you?

GERALD. Much the same as they say you use your horses, badly enough.

JOE Ha, ha, ha! So they do, Pennythorne, that's a fact.

PENNY. (L. C., *mockingly*) Ha, ha, ha! people had better mind their own business, that is when they've got any business. So many fellers one sees about haven't got any business; it's almost a wonder how they manage to live, ain't it, Mr. Goodwins?

GERALD. Goodwin, not Goodwins, Mr. Pennythorne. Don't mix me up with the sands of that name, pray.

PENNY. (*to* JOE) Do you hear that? Pretty insolence! Mix him up with the sands—that's a dig at your *moist* sugar. Why don't you kick him out? Where's your pride?

JOE. I'm not in the habit of kicking people out of *my* house; but I—a—(*looking significantly*) don't know what I *might* do in *certain* cases. (*aside*) He'd be a nice son-in-law he would.

Exit, C. D.

PENNY. (L., *turns and sees* ALICE *and* GERALD *talking, up* R., *aside*) That looks pretty—old Barlow's in his second childhood, to have this fellow about the place.

GERALD. Pennythorne, has it left off raining?

PENNY. Yes, *Mister* Goodwin, it has. (*aside*) Ain't got much on to spoil I should say.

GERALD. Charming as your society is, I fear I must tear myself away.

PENNY. (*aside*) If he tears himself much more he'll come to pieces. (*to* GERALD) Don't apologize; my coming here needn't detain you. (GERALD *shakes hands with* ALICE, *who rises*)

GERALD. On the contrary, that's what sends me out. (*aside to* PENNYTHORNE) Make yourself agreeable when I'm away. (PENNYTHORNE *grins horribly at being chaffed*) You'll find it difficult, but persevere. Good morning. (*seizing his hand and wringing it*) Don't indulge in your usual highflown intellectual conversation; bring yourself down to her level. (*wrings his hand again*) Bless you, my dear sir, bless you! *Exit at door*, L. C.

(ALICE *sits in easy chair*, R. *and works*)

PENNY. (*aside*) That fellow's a lunatic. The sooner that chap's off the premises the better.

ALICE. Ah, you don't like him, do you?

PENNY. (*aside*) Well, he's not my sort.

ALICE. No, that he certainly is not.

PENNY. I don't like your clever spoken people, with nothing to back it up. Ready wit's rubbish—ready money's what I respect. You can't get on without money, but you can do very well without being overloaded with brains.

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ALICE. (R.) *You've* done very well, I believe?

PENNY. (L., *leans on* ALICE'S *chair*) Yes, I have, Miss Alice;—I can write my cheque for a tidy sum any day in the week. But I ain't selfish, I'll share it all with the girl of my 'art.

ALICE. Oh, she'll be a happy woman.

PENNY. I've a nice house—top windows overlooking as pleasant a stable yard as you'd wish to see. When the hay comes in fresh of a Monday, it smells quite rooral. I've got as nice a trap——

ALICE. Trap—yes,—baited with——

PENNY. You don't bait carriages, you bait 'orses. (*aside*) What innocence for the Boro.' (*aloud*) Yes, Miss Alice, I've every comfort, every comfort except one, Miss Alice. (*ogles her*)

ALICE. (*aside*) If he looks at me in that way, I shall laugh in his face. I know I shall.

PENNY. When the labours of the day are over, there's no domestic comfort for *me*. No one to welcome me home, except old Jane, and old Jane, though well meaning, has fits about the 'ouse, which is horrible. So I'm drove from my fireside to the parlour of the Blue Lion, and there I try to drown it in the bowl. But Alice, there is some feelings as refuses to be drownded. (*getting close to her*)

ALICE. (*aside*) Oh. this is dreadful. (*rising*)

PENNY. What's the use of beating about the bush? You must have noticed my frequent visits, my languishing looks, my continual sighs, my pining condition. Alice, I love you.

ALICE. Oh, Mr. Pennythorne!

PENNY. It ain't a bad offer. You shall have the best fly whenever you want it, and old Tom Blower, when he's clean shaved, looks like a reg'lar gentleman's coachman. You shall have your pick of the 'orses, and there's a little room without a chimley, looking on to the stables, as shall be fitted up as a boodwor, all to yourself. Add to these the devotion of a faithful 'art, and what more can you desire?

ALICE. Oh, a great deal more, Mr. Pennythorne.

PENNY. Only name it, and I lay it—if procurable, at your feet. Is it jewlery?

ALICE. Mr. Pennythorne, I am greatly flattered by your offer.

PENNY. Name it not, most adorable of your sex. Your path shall be one of roses. Of course I mean as a figure of speech, for roses in our livery yard would be out of place: but still——

ALICE. I appreciate your motives, and thank you, but——

PENNY. Don't say "but"——

ALICE. But I cannot accept your offer.

PENNY. (*suddenly dropping the unwonted*) Why not?

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ALICE. I have said I thank you for your kindness, and can only repeat that I cannot accept your hand.

PENNY. You won't, eh?

ALICE. I cannot.

PENNY. Somebody else has——

ALICE. Pray do not continue the subject. (*crossing*, L.)

PENNY. (R.) You're flinging away such a chance as yor won't get again. Don't be a fool, Alice. (*crossing*, R.)

ALICE. (L.) Mr. Pennythorne, you forget yourself. (*crossing*, R.) Never mention this subject to me again. *Exit*, R. *door.*

PENNY. (*going up*) You're a fine proud madam, *you* are; a nice haughty aristocratic knock-me-down air *you've* got. Yes, and I like you all the better for it. (*coming down*) I hate your patient docile animals; give me a brute, with a bit of temper, and there's some pleasure in fighting with it, and breaking it, and getting the best of it. And I'll get the best of you, my pretty filly, or I'm much mistaken—She's no lover, I've watched her closely, and I should have known it if she had. Old Barlow keeps no company. I'm young, pretty well off, not so bad-looking, but she won't have me. And yet some folks talk about women equalling us in hintellect.

FLUKER. (*heard within shop*) Thank you—thank you very much, but I want to speak to him alone. Thank you—thank you very much.

FLUKER, *a prim little elderly man with a fussy manner, puts his head in, then enters door*, C.

Yes, he is here, all right. (*closes the door*)

PENNY. (*aside*) Who's this party? (*turns up*, R.—FLUKER *looks at him through glasses admiringly*)

FLUK. (*down*, L.) Hah! Quite ignorant of the event which has so altered his immediate prospects. "Alas! how heedless of their fate the little creatures play." Hem! scarcely an apt quotation perhaps, as in this instance the little creature is *not* playing. (*goes to* L., *before fire*)

PENNY. (*aside*) Awkward situation—why don't some one come? (FLUKER *goes up to back, coming down*, L.) Take a chair, sir? (*gives arm chair*, R.)

FLUK. (*blandly*) Thank you—thank you very much! (*goes round chair to* C.) Fine day!

PENNY. (*down*, L.) Was raining.

FLUK. (L. C.) Quite right, it was; but not now—*was* raining —*is* fine. Ha! ha! ha!

PENNY. Who is he, I wonder? (*leaning against mantel piece*)

FLUK. (L. C.—*aside*) There's no mistaking the likeness. There's no object in breaking the news too suddenly: I'll draw him out, and observe his character—it's my way. (*sits and*

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indicates that he wishes PENNYTHORNE *to sit too—both seated—to* PENNYTHORNE, *after looking round*) This is a strange world, sir.

PENNY. (L. C.) You'll excuse me, but you don't consider that an original remark, do you?

FLUK. (R. C.) Ha! ha! ha! Very good! very well put. No, it is far from original. But then what is original, would you be kind enough to inform me now?

PENNY. Well——

FLUK. Thank you, thank you very much.

PENNY. My ostler, Tom Blower, he's original.

FLUK. Ha! ha! just so, just so! very well put! Haven't the honour of Mr. Blower's acquaintance, but take your word for it. (*aside*) Just his uncle's droll way. It runs in the family—runs in the family.

PENNY. (*aside*) I don't feel altogether easy with this party.

FLUK. You'll excuse a stranger, but one who I trust is not long to remain so. (*bowing*)

PENNY. (*bows*) Oh.

FLUK. Yes; thank you—thank you very much. You'll excuse me, I repeat, if I congratulate you upon the calling you appear to have adopted on being thrown upon an unsympathetic world.

PENNY. (*aside*) What's he driving at? Thrown upon an unsympathetic world! I was never thrown but once in my life, and that was upon Barnes Common.

FLUK. Ha, ha, ha! (*aside*) The same vein of humour as his uncle's. (*aloud*) I mean, you seem to have fallen on your legs.

PENNY. No I didn't; anything but.

FLUK. You appear to have turned your equine tastes to account; still for a man of your family——

PENNY. Bless you, I've no family; I'm a bachelor.

FLUK. Yes, yes, of course—ha, ha! (*aside*) He's dreadfully livery-stablish in his appearance; but, poor fellow, what could he do? (*aloud*) But it's a long lane that has no turning, my dear sir, and brighter days are in store for us.

PENNY. What, for you and me?

FLUK. No, not for me—for you; quite right to be particular—business-like in the extreme.

PENNY. Now look here—I'm a plain man.

FLUK. You are, you are. Very well put.

PENNY. Then come to the point please.

FLUK. (*after looking round mysteriously and touching his heart*) Excuse me; but all right there—the heart you know?

PENNY. I'm as good-hearted as my neighbours.

FLUK. Not what I mean exactly. You don't suffer from palpitation? You can bear a sudden announcement, I suppose?

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PENNY. This is horrid!

FLUK. For I have a communication to make to you of the most overwhelming importance. You—a ——(*gets nearer to him*)

PENNY. Yes—speak up.

FLUK. You—a——

PENNY. Well?

FLUK. You had an uncle!

PENNY. (*sits back and stares*) What of it?

FLUK. I was his lawyer. He is no more. I can scarcely expect you to exhibit much grief, since you are, in consequence of the sad occurrence, the possessor of a gigantic fortune.

PENNY. (*gasping*) A gigantic——

FLUK. (*rapidly*) One hundred thousand pounds!

PENNY. (*after looking round bewildered, rises, grasps the back of his chair, and gasps*) Say it again!

FLUK. (*pleasantly and slowly*) One hundred thousand pounds.

PENNY. Phew! some mistake may——

FLUK. Our firm doesn't make mistakes, my dear sir. (*sits back, with glasses raised, watching* PENNYTHORNE *with a bland smile*)

PENNY. (*crossing*, R.) Me, with a hundred thousand pounds. It was always a question who old Ben Pennythorne, who made a fortune in Australia, sheep farming, would leave his money to. Hooray! A hundred thousand pounds! I'll sell the blessed business. (*crosses*, R.) Send Tom Blower to the right about. I'll become a gentleman; it'll give me a good deal of trouble, but I'll do it. (*crossing*, L.) I'll marry a regular thorough-bred aristocratic female. A high stepper—I'll—I'll— (FLUKER *rises*) I say, this isn't some practical joke? (*almost tearfully*) It's no confounded cruel lark?

FLUK. (R.) Our firm never larks, sir.

PENNY. Ha! ha! ha! (*shakes* FLUKER *and turns him round to* R., *crosses*, R., *and walks up and down excitedly*) A hundred thousand pounds! I knew it. (*crosses*, L.) Mother always said I should be a rich man; but I must let 'em all know my good luck. Here, Joe Barlow! Mrs. B.! Alice! here, all of you you, here, hi! What'll bring 'em?—Here, shop—That'll do it. (*shakes* FLUKER *again and throws himself on sofa*, R.)

FLUK. (*looking at him through his eyeglasses admiringly*) Delightful! He scorns to disguise his joy—excitable and impetuous—like his uncle—Charming, Charming! (PENNYTHORNE *throws himself on sofa and kicks over basket*)

Enter JOE *and* MRS. BARLOW, C.

JOE. (R.) What's the matter? what's up now?

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PENNY. (C.) A hundred thousand pounds, that's "What's the matter." Where's Alice?

Enter ALICE, R. *door, she comes down,* R.

Here, I say, a hundred thousand pounds, you know. Ha! ha! (*dances, then sinks into a chair*)

Enter ARABELLA *and* JANE, C. *door, down* L.

JOE. He's off his poor 'ead.

MRS. B. (L.) You'd better fetch a doctor, Joe.

PENNY. (*crossing,* L.) Here, Arabella Plover, Jane Pell—the more the merrier—I say, girls, I'm worth a hundred thousand pounds.

ARAB. *and* JANE. Law!

Enter SHOPBOY, C. *door, down* R. *corner.*

PENNY. (*crossing,* R.) Law—yes! I should think it is law—ain't it Fluker? (*digging him in the ribs*) Here, Tommy. (*to* SHOPBOY) Come here, sir. You've always been very civil to me—I've come into a hundred thousand pounds—here's a penny for you.

Enter GERALD, C. *door, stands,* L. C.

PENNY. (R. C.) Ha! ha! here, you sir, I don't bear malice, you know. I've come into a fortune, but I ain't proud—there—there's my hand, Goodwin.

FLUK. (R. C., *starting violently*) What! *Goodwin? Gerald* Goodwin—ain't *you* Mr. Goodwin?

PENNY. (R.) No!

GERALD. (L. C.) *I* am Gerald Goodwin most certainly. I don't think any one would care to dispute my claim to that unenviable appellation.

FLUK. (R. C., *horrified*) Oh, my *dear* sir, (*to* PENNYTHORNE) I've made an awful mistake. They told me I should find Mr. Goodwin here; I thought at the first glance that *you* resembled the late lamented. *He* was short—*you* were short—*he* was ugly—*you* were ugly. It's not *you* at all—it's *you,* my dear sir. (*to* GERALD) *Your* uncle, Mr. Desborough, is no more, and *you* have come into the hundred thousand pounds. I congratulate you, my dear sir—warmly, warmly!

(JOE *and* MRS. BARLOW *turn to* GERALD, *grasping each a hand*)

JOE. Congratulate you.
MRS. B. Congratulate you.
ARAB. *and* JANE. (*also taking his hand*) Congratulate you, Mr. Goodwin, I'm sure. } (*together*)
FLUK. Congratulate you, indeed.

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(MRS. BARLOW *and* JOE *and* FLUKER *crowd round* GERALD, *who appears overcome*—PENNYTHORNE *after looking on in stupid amazement, falls into the* SHOPBOY'S *arms*—ALICE, *a little way apart and in front, looks with an expression of anxiety and distrust at* GERALD, *as the Curtain descends slowly—the group surrounding* GERALD *congratulate him loudly*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A Room in the House of Gerald Goodwin, furnished most elegantly; doors,* R. *and* L.; *bay window,* R. C.; *two easy chairs,* R. C.; *sofa,* L.

PYEFINCH *discovered at table,* R. C., *putting away breakfast things on to a tray.*

PYEF. Two o'clock. (*looking at his watch*) Master's good for another four hours at least, then I suppose he'll come home and dress—then club—then opera—then grilled bones—then cards, and then far away in the dim future, bed. (*sings*)

There was a party as came from Flanders,
And his complexion it was very fair;
His eyes they sparkled like two salamanders,
And bright and curly was his 'ead of 'air.

This 'andsome party as came from Flanders,
Of his complexion took tremenjous care;
He was took quite sudden with the yaller jarnders,
And his complexion isn't what it were.

Master goes it he does. Not much putting by with *him*, quite right too; for my part, I consider a party as puts by unworthy the name of a man.

PENNYTHORNE *appears at door,* L.

Ah! you there Mr. Pennythorne? Horntray, mon nammy—Horntray.

Enter PENNYTHORNE, *door,* L.

PENNY. (L.) Why can't you say "come in." You're so fond of them French phrases—I hate foreigners, I think they come of a bad stock.

PYEF. (R.) Ah, you're prejudiced.

PENNY. I should be precious sorry if I wasn't. I'm a Briton, I am! Did you ever see a Frenchman ride?

PYEF. Often.

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PENNY. Well, then, how can you respect 'em? Then look at their cookery—what ain't grease is vinegar! I never tried but one French dinner, and I shall never forget it—give me a good honest English beefsteak as lets you know he's there! (*striking his chest*—PENNYTHORNE *crossing*, L.) Look, here's a guinea's worth of swimming in the yead with a foreign name to it. Now, if that was translated it would be dear at two-and-six.

PYEF. Ha! ha! *a party de four grar* at two-and-six.

PENNY. What's a *party de four grar?* Enough for a party of four?

PYEF. No—no! Party's the genteel word for Patty.

PENNY. Is it? I always thought the genteel name for Patty was Martha. Been having a spread, I suppose!

PYEF. No—only Major Blackshaw to breakfast. Him and master are as thick as——

PENNY. Go on, finish the simile. Thieves ain't a pleasant word; but perhaps it's appropriate.

PYEF. Nothing of the kind! The Major's a man of substance, and if you want to spec'late you can't do better than invest in anything you see his name to—I have done so with my small savings—sub rosy, of course.

PENNY. Well, nice hours your master keeps—he's out I know, for I sent his 'orse round, the bay stepper, an hour ago. I wanted to recommend him a chesnut mare as is to be had for a mere song. If he sees her he'll buy her, safe as the bank.

PYEF. And what's your notion of a mere song, now?

PENNY. Oh, somewhere about two hundred and thirty.

PYEF. Two hundred and thirty pounds a mere song! I should call that a hintire hopra!

PENNY. When you see it, burst out into rapture; and if your master and me come to terms, I shall be proud to hand you over a fiver. He'll buy it! Oh, you know the old proverb, "Set a beggar on horseback," and setterer.

PYEF. Don't see how it applies, though.

PENNY. (*confidentially*) Bless you, it's not so long ago that your master was hard-up—shabbiest chap you ever see—used to live at a cheese and candle shop.

PYEF. I know; Mr. Barlow's a relative of mine.

PENNY. Doose he is!

PYEF. Yes; married a distant relation of mine from Shropshire. When I called in to see him, and described my new master, I thought as Alice would—— (*breaks down*)

PENNY. (R.—*fiercely*) What? Go on!

PYEF. (L.) Look here, Mr. Pennythorne, don't address me as if I was an 'orse—just as if you wanted me to "come over!"

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PENNY. (*milder*) Ah, go on, you can tell *me*; I'm a friend of the family.

PYEF. (*aside*) Happy family! Well, she turned pale and trembled, and then she grew scarlet, and so says I——

PENNY. *Spoons*, says you—eh?

PYEF. What a man you are to see into a party's mind!

PENNY. Go on, old fellow—go on.

PYEF. Well, dropping in occasional of an evening, and smoking a pipe with Mr. Barlow, I soon began to see it all. Why she's never tired of asking questions about him. It's my belief she'd never leave off talking about him—never.

PENNY. Wouldn't she, though—a pretty, jilted, soft-hearted thing!

PYEF. Well, I've a soft heart myself, and when she begged and prayed me to let her come here some morning when master was out, and have a peep at the place he lives in, I hadn't the courage to refuse her.

PENNY. Hadn't you, though? Very kind and nice of you—very. (*aside*) Thick-headed fool!

PYEF. I thought it might be some small comfort to her, poor girl; and I've been in love myself once.

PENNY. Only once?

PYEF. Yes, and was cruelly thrown over.

PENNY. Ah! you look it.

PYEF. And it's my belief, poor thing, she's pining away.

PENNY. Bah! people don't pine away in the Boro'. No, they bow their neck to misfortune, and—take a beershop.

PYEF. Ah! then you don't believe in romance?

PENNY. Romance!—no. I put my money on a 'orse of that name once, but he broke down at the corner. I'd have sooner backed "Matter-o'-Fact;" he was a plain-looking brute, but he won easy. (*aside, as* PYEFINCH *goes up*) I was right about Alice, she cared for him after all, and she loves him more than ever. Well, he's rich, so that's natural. And he threw her over—that's natural. And she won't have anything to say to me—that's natural.—No, damn it! that's not natural. Well, I'm off—(*goes up*, R., *putting on his gloves, and comes down*, L.) just going to see Mr. Fluker—I employ him now. Pyefinch, by the way, you were talking about your savings; you don't happen to have a few hundreds you'd like to lend on good security? because I know a party who wants money.

PYEF. Ah, everybody knows *him*. No, I haven't at present; I've been spec'latin' a little on 'ouse property lately. There was three little cottages as caught my eye at 'Olloway, and so I——

PENNY. Oh, all right! don't trouble yourself to explain. (*aside*) Me hard up, and everything here actually reeking of

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ready money! The very vallet going out and a collaring of cottages! I'm boiling over with annoyance, and I must distract my mind somehow. I know—I'll go home and blow up old Tom Blower—he's sixty-eight and asmatical—and it'll do me good. If he ain't in the way, I'll go over to the Boro' and blow up old Barlow; and if *he* ain't in the way, dammy! I shall blow up myself. *Exit, door* L.

PYEF. (*turning to the table*) Pleasant fellow that—deal of the milk of human kindness there. He's the sort of party as would sell up his father smilin'. (*sings*)

This wretched party as came from Flanders,
Who lost his formier complexion rare,
Heloped to Hingia with Heliza Saunders,
Who lived close by to Canonbury Square.

I'm glad he's gone, though; for if that poor disappointed gal was to come when he was here, there might be words.

Enter ALICE, *leaning on* JOE'S *arm*, L. *door*.

JOE. You would come, my dear—you would come. There was no keeping you from it. I think it's very silly of you when a fellow behaves like a—(ALICE *looks at him*) Well, there, I don't say anything against him; he's got a conscience. People with a hundred thousand pounds even have consciences I believe; and that'll talk to him harder than I could.

ALICE. (*crossing*, C.) You're sure he's out for a long time?

PYEF. (R.) Yes, or I'd never have consented to your coming here. As it is, I tremble in my shoes.

JOE. (L.) Ah! and very comfortable shoes they are to tremble in, John Pyefinch. There, my dear, you've had your wish.

ALICE. I wished to see the place he lived in dear uncle! When I go away I can picture the whole scene: see him in his handsome rooms surrounded by his friends, who all love him so: see him with his face lighted up with happiness—hear his ringing laugh, his cheery voice. It was a foolish fancy, but it's only for this once, uncle Joe—only this once. (*sinks on to a chair*, C.)

JOE. (*aside*) I do not understand women; I've been married forty year come May, and know nothing about 'em—they're what my Sunday paper calls a terra hincognito.

PYEF. Quite agree with you as regards the terror. (*crossing*, C.)

JOE. They're like spaniels, John, the harsher you are to 'em, the more fond they grow of you. It was a mistake his saying he loved her—he knew she was coming into a tidy property, and as he was hard up, why——

ALICE. (*rising*) Don't speak like that of him—I am sure he

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loved me—it is not fair to think he could marry one in my humble station—it would disgrace him amongst his friends, who are people of his own class.

JOE. (C.) Not many of 'em, I hope, for the sake of society.

ALICE. Besides, I should be so out of place as the wife of a rich gentleman; people would look down upon me and laugh at my ignorant ways.

JOE. (C.) Ignorant of what! Ignorant of pretence and sham, and fine Frenchified airs.

ALICE. Oh, uncle, uncle, you wrong him—you do, indeed! You speak of *your* pride, that pride I share, and though I am not ashamed to tell you that I love him still, I shall remember what is due to you, and to myself. (*sits*, R.)

PYEF. (*down*, L.) Ah, ill-assorted matches are dreadful things. When I was in the service of old Mrs. Wigsby, Oriental widow, in Bruton Street, with a lac of rupees and one tooth, I might have made a splendid marriage, for the old party's life was one long ogle; but "No," I says, "Pyefinch," I says, "better is penury with the girl of your affections, than the silken lap of luxury when sentiments and sets of teeth do not assimulate.

JOE. Well, I don't often come into this neighbourhood, so I'll take the opportunity of going to see my old friend Ned Lomax in Princes Street; he's in the oil and colour line is Ned, and going on wonderful. I shall be back soon, Ally, my dear. (*going—aside to* PYEFINCH) Come along, and leave her alone a bit, John—she'll have a reg'lar good cry, and come back to the Boro' quite refreshed. Come along!

Exit PYEFINCH *and* JOE, *door* L.

ALICE. (*looking after* JOE, *and leaning on chair*) Kind, dear good uncle Joe; no sudden access of wealth would have changed *your* simple honest nature. Fortune may smile or frown on *you*; but rich or poor *you* would be the same, I know. But, Gerald, should *I* have acted so? And yet, compared with him, I was actually rich; but he never knew it when he asked me to be his wife. They cannot accuse him of *that* at all events. (*walks down*) It was my own fault, I should have told him all—have placed the money in his hands, and bid him use it for the best. "You shall not begin your wedded life by feeling ashamed of your husband." Those were his words, and he meant them. Oh, money, money! how I hate its very name!

Enter PYEFINCH, *rapidly, down* L.

PYEF. Here's master coming down the street with Major Blackshaw. Whatever is to be done?

ALICE. Oh let me go—let me go! (*rising and going*, L.)

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PYEF. (*stopping her*) Oh, but he's hurrying along, so you're sure to meet him.

ALICE. Anything rather than that. What shall I do? What shall I do?

PYEF. What shall you do? What shall I do? What does he mean by coming back unexpected, and taking a party unawares? There he is on the stairs.

ALICE. (*in alarm*) Oh, why did I ever come? Why did I ever come?

GERALD. (*without*, L.) On the contrary, my dear fellow, I'm only too glad I met you.

ALICE. (*tremblingly, and greatly agitated*) Put me somewhere, anywhere. I'd rather die than meet him here.

PYEF. There, there—go in there. They'll go soon.

ALICE *hurries into room*, R.

PYEF. (*his back to door*) This'll be a warning to me: perhaps a *month's* warning. Oh, woman—woman! it's my opinion——

Enter GERALD, *door*, L.—*he is dressed in the first style of fashion.*

GERALD. Come along, Blackshaw, what a slow fellow you are. Come along. (*puts his hat down*, R.)

Enter MAJOR BLACKSHAW, *door*, L.

MAJOR. (L.) Slow and sure, my dear fellow, slow and sure. If I'd been as impetuous as you, I should never have been worth a penny. (*takes off gloves and sits, looking at* PYEFINCH, *who is fidgetting about with his back to the door*, R.) Has your man got St. Vitus's dance.

PYEF. Certainly not, sir.

MAJOR. Can't bear fidgetty people.

GERALD. You needn't stay, Pyefinch.

PYEF. (*coming down*, L.) Beg pardon, sir—thought you might want——

MAJOR. Not at present.

PYEF. Very good, sir. (*aside*) The cold water that's running down my back, would float a hiron clad. *Exit door*, L.

MAJOR. Besides, those stairs are no joke, they're contrived to test people's tendency to palpitation of the heart I should say, like those at the insurance offices.

GERALD. (R.) Now, Blackshaw, don't talk shop. It's an extraordinary thing, you never can drop that British and Foreign, National Australasian, what is it Company of yours. I can never master the title; what is it for the thousand and oneth time?

MAJOR. Have a mind the title, my volatile young friend; it's sufficient for you that you are to be a director. Have a weed?

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GERALD. Not at present, thanks.

MAJOR. Should. (*lights cigar*) Smoking steadies the nerves. What would life be without smoke? a dreary blank *Apropos* of blank, my generally vivacious friend, you don't seem in your usual spirits.

GERALD. Oh, yes, I am, Blackshaw — it's only your fancy.

MAJOR. "Fancy?" Don't deal in the article; leave that sort of thing to poets, who're all inspired idiots. One of 'em—isn't it Shakespeare? says, "What's in a name?" He never started a company: unless it was a theatrical one!

GERALD. You profess great reverence for titles, Blackshaw—yet I never see your name at any fashionable gatherings. I should have thought now——

MAJOR. Should you? My young friend, you're new to this sort of thing—I'm not—socially swells bore me—late hours would interfere with business. Business before everything! By the way, you're still of the same mind about the Brittanic and Australasian—of course a few thousands will be a trifle to you. Money makes money, and I shall be able to introduce you to a dozen good things.

GERALD. Oh, I'm in your hands, Blackshaw, and when I get the money——

MAJOR. Ah, Fluker's is a horrid dilatory firm—meanwhile look on me as your banker.

GERALD. Thanks, Blackshaw—I'm deeply in your debt as it is. (*hangs his head dejectedly*)

MAJOR. (*after looking at him*) You'll excuse me making the remark, but what deuced bad company you are.

GERALD. I know it—bad company for my friends, worse for myself.

MAJOR. Liver?

GERALD. No! no!

MAJOR. Heart perhaps?

GERALD. (*sighing*) That's nearer.

MAJOR. Bad for a man of business. Never fell in love myself—never had time. Excuse me, but are the symptoms always of this depressing nature? I thought Cupid was rather a lively card.

GERALD. I wish I could make light of it, Blackshaw, but I can't. It's very hard to feel that one's a scoundrel!

MAJOR. I suppose it is—I never was a scoundrel myself—never had time.

GERALD. I wish I could say as much!

MAJOR. A scoundrel with a hundred thousand pounds. The thing's impossible. (*aside*) Wants to confide. Young people always do. (*aloud*) You're getting misanthropical

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You're too well off. You're suffering from an effusion of affluence on the brain. You've got too much money.

GERALD. (*with passion*) Money—what can money do?

MAJOR. What can't it do, you mean.

GERALD. It can't bring back a man's peace of mind. It can never wipe out the memory of a wicked deed. (*comes closer and becomes more intense*) Blackshaw, when I hadn't a shilling I loved a girl as well and purely as a man could love. I little thought how mean and selfish would that love become, when money came and made a coward of me. Half blind—half mad—I could not hear the voice of honour, it was drowned in the rustle of the notes, and the rattle of the gold; and when the short and feverish dream was over, I woke to find myself with conscience as my grim companion. By night and day it is beside me, taunting me with the recollection of a mean and wretched act. Blackshaw, you talk of money, why man, I'd give every penny I possess to own once more the honest heart I had six months ago.

MAJOR. (*aside*) Very violent symptoms indeed; violent remedies alone are effectual in such cases. (*aloud*) You should get away for a bit; should buy a yacht and do the Mediterranean, or an alpenstock, and go in for mountains. There's rather a run upon Norway, just now. Why not try Iceland? (*aside*) That would cool him.

GERALD. No, I've seen enough of the world—too much.

MAJOR. I presume she was in a humble station?

GERALD. Yes, she was.

MAJOR. (*aside*) They generally are. (*aloud*) A regular case of affection on both sides, eh!

GERALD. She loved me when I was poor.

MAJOR. (*aside*) That was weak. (*aloud*) And you love her still?

GERALD. Better than my life!

MAJOR. (*aside*) He's very young. (*aloud*) You see in your position you can afford to do almost anything—but marry.

GERALD. (*laughs sneeringly*)

MAJOR. Never married myself—never had time. In society you'll find yourself a sort of social target, with everybody aiming at your gold. But you mustn't think of marrying.

GERALD. I do not think of it.

MAJOR. That's right. (*hitching chair towards* GERALD) Now, we're men of the world.

GERALD. I'm afraid we are.

MAJOR. You must cast aside all this second-hand chivalry. It's all very well in plays and novels, but it don't do in real life. You've a career before you, and mustn't be clogged with a wife. Time enough to think of that in ten years. After all

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it isn't doing these sort of people a kindness by marrying them. She'd have been out of her element. If your conscience pricks you, and you can't help thinking about her, make her a handsome allowance, and——

GERALD. (*turning towards him*) And what?

MAJOR. Make a lady of her, but not Mrs. Goodwin.

GERALD. (*turning fiercely upon him and seizing him*) Scoundrel! Recall those words! Recall them, Blackshaw, or I'll——

MAJOR. Take your hands off me, you impetuous fool, are you mad?

Enter ALICE, R. *door, comes down,* R.

GERALD. Unsay them, or I'll shake the life out of you.

MAJOR. Hands off! or I'll—— (*goes up,* L. C.)

ALICE. (*coming down*) Help! Gerald! (*she pauses awkwardly*)

(MAJOR, *who has been about to grapple with* GERALD, *after a pause, bows to* ALICE, *and with a look of amazement goes up,* R.)

GERALD. Alice! you here.

ALICE. Forgive me. I—I—will never come again. It was foolish and wrong of me. I beg your pardon, Gerald—Mr. Goodwin.

GERALD. (*about to approach her*) Alice.

ALICE. (*proudly*) We are strangers now: may you be happy.

GERALD. (*bitterly*) Happy!

ALICE. (R.) We shall never meet again! It was through my own wilful folly that we have met now. You cannot regret it more than I do.

GERALD. (C.) I do not regret it, Alice, since it gives me an opportunity of asking your pardon very—very humbly for my conduct—with that pardon grant me one word of hope.

ALICE. You seem to forget that your friend is present. Farewell! (*going*)

SIR RUMSEY. (*heard without*) Ha! ha! capital—capital!

CHARK. (*without*) Ha! ha! not bad I think!

ALICE. (*distressed*) Oh, why did I ever come!

MAJOR. A pleasant affair, this.

Enter PYEFINCH, L., *drops down,* L.

PYEF. (*announcing*) Sir Rumsey Waters, and Mr. Charker! (*seeing* ALICE) Oh, the murder's out!

Enter SIR RUMSEY WATERS *and* CHARKER, L., *they pause on seeing* ALICE.

SIR RUM. Hem, Charker, I'm afraid we're——

CHARK. Yes, Sir Rumsey, I'm afraid we are. Devil fine girl! (*they go up,* L.)

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GERALD. Alice—Miss Barlow—permit me to see you——

Enter JOE, *door*, L.

JOE. No, thankee—I'll do that!

ALICE. Uncle! (*rushing to him, and hiding her face from the others*)

MAJOR. (R. C., *to* SIR RUMSEY *and* CHARKER) Rather unpleasant imbroglio—I shouldn't advise you to joke him about it. (*retires up*, L. C., *with* CHARKER *and* SIR RUMSEY)

JOE. (*aside*) I'll break every bone in John Pyefinch's skin for telling us there wouldn't be not a soul here till the evening. This'll be a warning to you, Ally, my child. You would come, and a nice mess you've made of it.

GERALD. (R.) Mr. Barlow, I am greatly to blame; but not in this instance, believe me.

JOE. Bah! Come, Ally.

ALICE. Uncle, don't part with him in anger. Surely he is free to act as he pleases. You would forgive him if you had heard how he defended my good name against one who would have sullied it.

JOE. Who's that?—where is he? I'll let him see.

(MAJOR *makes a slight movement up stage*)

ALICE. No, no, it was only wild and heedless talk, which I had no right to hear, but he would not brook it. Don't part from him in anger, uncle Joe.

JOE. Anger! Ha!

GERALD. Won't you shake hands with me?

JOE. No, sir. I am a very humble common sort of man, but I don't shake hands with *everybody*. You've seen the last of *us*, sir. We shall never darken your door again. (*softening a little*) I thought I could read a face as easy as a printed book; I fancied I read yours correct. I was wrong, Ally was wrong, and she'll come to know it some day. (*puts his arm round her*) At first it's a little hard for her, perhaps, but she'll summon up courage. (ALICE *sobs*) You've gone *your* way—we'll go ours. Good morning, and good bye. (*leads* ALICE *away, she makes a movement as if to speak to* GERALD, *but* JOE *touches her arm, and she exits with a half smothered sob —after a pause*)

SIR R. (*coming down*, R., *with* CHARKER) I say, I suppose we may speak *now*. Have you got nothing to offer us, Goodwin?

CHARK. Ha! ha! right, Sir Rumsey.

GERALD. Pardon me, gentlemen, I am ashamed to have detained you. (*aside*) I'll stifle this maudlin sentiment. (*with forced gaiety*) We're all fools some time or other, eh, Waters?

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SIR R. Proud and happy to say I've been one myself. Eh, Charker?

CHARK. Not the least doubt of it. (*they go up*, R.)

GERALD. (*to* MAJOR) Blackshaw, forgive my recent outburst of virtuous indignation. I was half mad for the moment.

MAJOR. (L.) You were. Perhaps you'll take advantage of a lucid interval to order in something sparkling—Pyefinch!

Enter PYEFINCH, *door*, L.

PYEF. Sir.

MAJOR. Something sparkling, sir.

PYEF. Something sparkling? Yes, sir. *Mr. Fluker!* (SIR RUMSEY, CHARKER, *and* BLACKSHAW *sit at table*, R. C.)

Enter FLUKER, *door* L, *fussily.*

FLUK. Ha, quite a gathering, I declare. Sir Rumsey—you here! and Charker too? Bless my soul! quite a gathering—ha, ha, ha! Looks like a board meeting, doesn't it, Blackshaw? Goodwin, my dear sir, I see the mail's arrived, and we shall be able to settle everything at once, I hope.

SIR R. (*up*, R. C.) Hang your law business, let's be jolly (*sits at table*, R.) Here, Pyefinch, you villain, be continually bringing intoxicating fluids until you're told to stop, sir.

PYEF. Yes, Sir Rumsey. (*aside*) And there's that poor gal in a dead faint in the housekeeper's room. Oh, this afternoon'll turn my 'air grey!

SIR R. What's this—champagne? bah! only fit for women and fools! Sauterne—ugh! Got any brandy? nothing like it for the nerves.

GERALD. Aye, brandy!

MAJOR. Help yourself—you want it. (*pushes decanter to him*)

CHARK. Well, for my part—I'm a nobody, and I confess Clicquot's good enough for me. (GERALD *fills and drinks*)

FLUK. Ha, ha, ha! very well put, Charker, very well put.

MAJOR. What do you say to dining at Greenwich to-day—It'll do us all good?

SIR R. Well thought of, Major. What do you say, Goodwin?

GERALD. (*excited*) With all my heart.

MAJOR. (*rising, with an important manner*) All those who are in favour of this proposition will be pleased to hold up their hands. (*business*) Ha, ha! carried unanimously. (*they rattle their glasses and turn with their backs to Audience, talking together*)

PENNYTHORNE *appears at door* L. *and beckons* FLUKER.

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PENNY. (*in a fierce whisper*) Come here come here!

FLUK. (*in the act of raising glass to his lips*) Bless my heart, Mr. Pen——

PENNY. Hush! come here, I tell you—noose, noose!

FLUK. (*aside*) Noose! Oh, hang it! *Exit*, D. L., *unnoticed.*

SIR R. A capital notion—you always *are* tumbling over capital notions—the "British and Australasian" was *your* notion, major, and a deuced good one too.

GERALD. Now, Sir Rumsey, drop the "Company." Don't let's have the skeleton at the banquet. By-the-bye, talking of skeletons, where's Fluker? (*turning round a little*)

MAJOR. Sneaked home, depend upon it. He shied at the Trafalgar—a close-fisted old hunks! Like the knights of old, "a stirrup cup, and then to horse!"

GERALD. Bumpers, my boys; remember I'm host to-day.

SIR R. *and* MAJOR. No, no!

GERALD. But I insist, sir. Confound it! don't cross my humour.

SIR R. The Trafalgar by all means. The old room, Blackshaw—the snug one with the bay window.

MAJOR. Yes. 'Twas in Trafalgar Bay! Ha, ha, ha! (*they all laugh*)

During the laughter, re-enter FLUKER, *very pale and greatly agitated—he advances towards* GERALD, *touches him on the shoulder*—GERALD *turns towards him*—PENNYTHORNE *appears watching the scene at door*)

FLUK. Mr.—Mr. Goodwin——

GERALD. Bad habit that of tapping people on the shoulder, Fluker—thought I was arrested. What's the matter?

MAJOR. Ha, ha! You arrested with your wealth, that's a a grand idea.

FLUK. Just come aside a moment. Phew! (*wipes his brow with his handkerchief, much agitated, and goes down with* GERALD)

MAJOR. Take care, Goodwin; avoid consultations with our friend there; there's six-and-eightpence in his every syllable.

FLUK. (*to* GERALD) My dear sir, bear it—bear it like a man. Life's made up of disappointments—bitter disappointments!

GERALD. (*seriously*) Well, sir?

FLUK. The hundred thousand pounds——

GERALD. Yes. (*the* GUESTS *who have risen and come down a little*, R., *begin to listen*)

FLUK. We thought the evidence of your uncle's death would prove indisputable. This mail was to bring ample proofs, so that everything might have been concluded; but it hasn't brought anything of the kind—on the contrary it's brought——

GERALD. Well?

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FLUK. Your uncle himself. (*pause*)

GERALD. You—you are certain of this?

PENNY. (*at door*, L.) I am, for I've seen him.

GERALD. You, sir?

PENNY. Yes, *me*, sir. I was at Mr. Fluker's office on business, when Mr. Desborough walked in, all alive oh; and a pretty rage he's in about people killing him when he only had a jungle fever. He used pretty strong language about you, and said——

GERALD. Enough, sir. (PENNYTHORNE *retires up*, L.—GUESTS *crowd round him*) And so the bubble's burst! (*sits*, R. C., *with his head in his hands*)

FLUK. Don't take it to heart, my dear sir—don't take it to heart.

MAJOR. Hem! Goodwin, this is horrible! (*coming down*) How about my numerous advances?

FLUK. (*aside*) My numerous advances too. And the bills you've run up on the strength of the money. Oh, this is awful!

CHARK. (*coming down*, R.) And by gad, sir, I introduced him to my tailor.

SIR R. (*down*, L.) And I thought I was doing Dregs, the wine merchant, a good turn when I told him not to think of sending in his bill to him—the impostor!

PENNY. And there's a tidy sum owing to me too, for horses' keep; and my friends, Tippin and Burns, of Long Acre, they've been let in nicely. Him a ordering a mail pheeaton, and a brougham, and a patent dog cart on a new principle, and then never paying for them.

SIR R. That's not at all a new principle, my friend.

MAJOR. Fluker, you've behaved like a lunatic! How dare you allow your friends to be let in like this? How dare you, sir?

FLUK. Damme, sir—don't bully me. We all know why *you* lent him money.

MAJOR. Do you dare to insinuate——

FLUK. Do you dare to raise your hand threateningly to me, sir? (*snaps his fingers at the* MAJOR, *then turns from him indignantly, with his hands under his coat tails*)

SIR R. Come! come! come! This is disgraceful!

FLUK. Then how dare he——

MAJOR. What does he mean by—— (*retires up*, C.)

PENNY. Oh! it's downright abominable! reg'lar robbery! Swindler! impostor! (*crosses*, R. C.)

PYEF. (*without*) No, no, you mustn't.

ALICE. (*without*) Let me pass, I say! I will see—I will speak to him. (*at the sound of her voice* GERALD *appears struck with shame*)

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PENNY. Alice here. What's the meaning of this?

Enter ALICE *and* JOE, *door* L.

JOE. Ally! Ally! my dear.

ALICE. What's this I hear? Tell me—tell me, some one. (*looking round*)

PENNY. Mr. Goodwin here's no more right to the hundred thousand pounds than I have. His uncle's alive, and here he's been a flinging money about as didn't belong to him, a getting into debt, and me and the rest of the creditors won't get a copper.

ALICE. (L. C.) Mr. Goodwin—Gerald, is this true?

GERALD. (R. C.) Yes, every word.

ALICE. And you will be disgraced, imprisoned perhaps—Oh! how much does it all come to—all that he has to make good?

MAJOR. (*back*, R.) Three or four thousand pounds if it's a penny.

ALICE. Uncle Joe, you are well off—and my money comes to more than that. Gerald, I have enough to clear you. He shall have it every shilling!

JOE. (L.) No, no! you don't know what you are saying—You don't know what you are doing! (*half aside to her*) You haven't got the money.

ALICE. Yes my father left it you in trust for me, and he shall *have* it.

JOE. But I tell you it's go—(*stops suddenly*)

GERALD. (C., *seated*) Spare your words, sir; I have not yet fallen so low as to accept money from the woman I have wronged.

ALICE. (L. C., *to* JOE) You hear him—he rejects my offer; he never thought of money when he said he loved me. Look at him, uncle Joe—deserted, and despised by the friends who so recently fawned upon, and flattered him. There is not one amongst them who would move a step to save him from contempt and misery: *you* stood aloof from him when he was rich; now that he is poor, despised, a ruined man—oh, uncle Joe, won't you—*won't you give him your hand now?* (JOE *gives his hand to* GERALD, *who clasps it with his head bowed*—ALICE *with a convulsive sob falls upon her uncle's breast*, L.)

GUESTS *grouped*, R. GERALD. JOE. ALICE. L.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

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ACT III.

SCENE.—*Same as Act I.*

MRS. BARLOW *seated at accounts, back at table,* R. C.—JOE *pacing the stage*—JANE *and* ARABELLA *seated,* R.

JOE. (L.) Bah! Pareel of women. Love! Fiddlesticks! no such thing as love after eighteen—very well for school girls; sensible women think of a home, and a comfortable future. Love in a cottage is pretty enough to talk about, but it don't pay.

JANE. (L.) Oh, you know you don't mean it, Mr. Barlow! There isn't a warmer hearted man in the Boro' than you, I know. Is there, Arabella?

ARAB. (R.) That there isn't, Jane dear.

JOE. Nothing of the kind—I'm not good-hearted. If ever I have been I'm not going to be so any more. It don't pay, Jane Plover, it don't pay. (*during this he is pacing stage*)

JANE. Who was it but you who advised me not to have anything to do with young Rawkins, the cornchandler, who kept his gig, and was quite the gentleman? Who was it but you who told me he'd come to no good, and that I'd better marry a poor man, if he was honest, and industrious, than all the cornchandlers in the world? Yes, and when I said no, and he married Jenny, didn't the wheel come off the gig only the very next week, and him pitch on his head, and poor Jenny's a widow, and me still in the market; and you to say you haven't a good heart too. Why it's quite rich, Mr. Barlow.

MRS. B. (*at table at back,* R.) That's right; give it him, girls, he deserves all he gets, every bit. (*a little soured*)

JOE. (*stopping*) There, there, my own flesh and blood a revolting against me. Go on, go on; I can bear it, my back's broad enough. (*paces again*)

JANE. Then look at the way you took that young man Goodwin by the hand, when he hadn't a friend, and him to turn round like an ungrateful fellow and despise——

JOE. (*turning sharply*) Hold your tongue—hold your tongue, Jane Plover—and don't talk about things you don't understand.

JANE. Well, I'm sure, Arabella.

ARAB. I think we're *dee tro,* Jane dear.

MRS. B. Oh, don't be surprised, my dears, he's just as rude to me. He's a changed man is my husband. Don't look for any civility from *him.*

JANE. (*offended*) We don't, mum.

MRS. B. Look at him, he's as different as possible from what he was a year ago—he's always got a scowl on his face and a cross word for every one. Why, bless my heart! he don't even

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comb his hair as he used to. (JOE'S *hair is stubby, rough, and uncomfortable*)

JOE. You leave my hair alone, Mrs. Barlow; if it is untidy it's my own.

MRS. B. That's a hint to me, dear, which if I am drove to a front it's my misfortune, and not my fault, coming, as I do, of a bald family.

JANE. Of course, and no *man* would throw it in your face.

JOE. Ha, ha! I am not a man, I am a monster.

ARAB. Many a true word spoken in jest, Mr. Barlow. Come, Jane dear, let's continue our prommynade.

JOE. Ha, ha! prommynade! Gals don't take a walk now—they prommynade. Ha, ha! (*the* GIRLS *go towards door*)

JANE. Good morning, Mrs. Barlow.

ARAB. Good morning—good morning, Mr. Barlow, and may your temper improve.

JANE. Not likely, I'm sure.

ARAB. Far from it.

MRS. B. Good morning, we all have our trials.

JOE. There—there, continue your prommynard. *Hally vous ong—hally vous ong.* (*the* GIRLS *go off*, MRS. B. *looking at* JOE, *and* JOE *looking at her*)

MRS. B. (*her arms akimbo*) Well, sir?

JOE. (*ditto*) Well, mum?

MRS. B. P'raps you'll inform me how long this is to last?

JOE. Well, I should say about a week, at the end of which time—enter the brokers, off goes the goods, and down comes the curtain: that's the pro-grame.

MRS. B. And then?

JOE. Then there's nothing for us but to walk.

MRS. B. Walk!

JOE. Or, if you prefer it, *prommynard*. What's done can't be undone. (MRS. B. *sits and rocks her chair in grief*, R.) There—there you are at it again; can't you sit still and look ruin in the face like a sensible woman.

MRS. B. Oh, Joe—Joe! to think it should come to this after all these years. If you'd only confided in your wife, instead of taking the advice of a parcel of adventurers, this would never have happened.

JOE. That's right—revile me when all I did, I fancied was for the best. Alice don't say a word against me, though she might have me up as a robber if she chose.

MRS. B. (*frightened*) Oh, Joe, don't talk like that!

JOE. It's true—wasn't the money left to me in trust for her, with the understanding it was to be invested in certain securities, and didn't I go and put it all into a concern as was only a swindle after all?

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MRS. B. (*with fervour*) With your own, Joe—your own went with it, recollect that—you've lost every shilling as well as she.

JOE. Well, that ain't any consolation!

MRS. B. Oh yes, it is, Joe, oh yes it is. (*determinedly*)

JOE. I could have bore this, if it had only been us, but to think my Ally—the best girl that ever breathed should have lost every penny.

MRS. B. What do you mean? She's young and got the world before her. If she was willing to give up her money to one who treated her like Gerald Goodwin, I hope she don't grudge it to her own uncle, who nursed her in his arms when she was an infant and who always loved her so, and treated her so well. If her father did leave her some money, who helped him to make it but you? Didn't you do all you could for him when he hadn't a friend?—besides, she can marry somebody with money, which you can't.

JOE. (*aside*) That's very well put.

MRS. B. And she's going to, like a sensible girl.

JOE. (*sighs heavily*) Ah!

MRS. B. What's that for? I know, you're going to begin your old complaints against Mr. Pennythorne! Mr. Pennythorne's behaved like a man of honour! He didn't go tumbling into a sham fortune and cry off—no, he's been a friend throughout, and more so than ever of late!

JOE. (*aside*) Ah, if he knew my awful position!

MRS. B. And though he knew all about Alice's fondness for another, he's renewed his proposals like a gentleman—Alice must marry him of course?

JOE. Well, he has stuck to his colours, that's certain, and he's always saying he despises money, too, which is lucky; but still, when I think of his marrying my Ally——

MRS. B. Oh! you must put your feelings in your pocket, Joe.

JOE. Well, as I've got nothing else to put there, I 'spose I must. Now I'll be off and see Ned Lomax—perhaps he can lend me a hand till things right themselves a bit. There's generally some fragments of the worst wreck, and if I could but keep afloat for a few months we might carry on. Five and twenty year ago I lent Ned eighty pound—wonder if he remembers it now. He's got a country house, and keeps his carriage.

MRS. B. Then he don't remember it.

JOE. Mrs. Barlow, I wouldn't have such an opinion of human nature as you've got, not to be made the Emperor of Russia—and that's saying a good deal for a tallow chandler. (*going to door*, C.)

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MRS. B. Well, good-bye, Joe—wish you luck, old man—hope your friend Ned 'll send you home in his carriage.

JOE. Oh—oh, you—you Mackyvelli! *Exit, door, C.*

MRS. B. Mackyvelli, indeed! I wonder who *she* was. Ned Lomax lend any one a shilling, that's not likely. He was always a hard-hearted fellow was Lomax, even when he was a young man, and hearts are like Dutch cheeses, the older they grow, the harder they get. However, to give the what's-his-name his due, I will say Mr. Fluker——

FLUK. (*putting his head in door*) Might I—a——

MRS. B. (*starting*) Law, Mr. Fluker! what a turn you gave me, sir. Talk of the old gentleman, and——

FLUK. (L., *pleasantly*) And a lawyer appears. Ha! ha! thank you—thank you very much. (*comes down, and looks through his glasses very mysteriously*)

MRS. B. (R., *aside*) I'm not over fond of lawyers. I don't feel quite easy. Perhaps he's come on disagreeable business.

FLUK. Hem! Mrs. Barlow—is a—Mr. Barlow in?

MRS. B. No, he's not. (*aside*) Don't like his manner. He's trying to ogle I do believe.

FLUK. You'll excuse this visit I'm sure.

MRS. B. (*in a downright way*) Yes; if it's on business.

FLUK. Very well put. Hem, no; it isn't exactly on business. (*looking at her with his head on one side*)

MRS. B. (*aside*) What can he mean? I'm all of a tremble.

FLUK. Mrs. Barlow, you'll pardon my putting the question, but are you partial to foreigners?

MRS. B. (*looking at him*) 'Ate 'em.

FLUK. (*smiling*) No, no, no.

MRS. B. But I do. Mr. Pennythorne's opinions and mine on the subject are identified.

FLUK. Now, Mrs. Barlow, I've a proposal to make to you.

MRS. B. Go on, sir, but don't forget I'm a married woman.

FLUK. Oh, you are, you are—very much so. But—a—perhaps I'd better call him in. Have I your permission to call him in?

MRS. B. Call who in?

FLUK. The Count. Count, would you step this way.

MRS. B. Oh, Joe wouldn't allow this, if he was at home.

Enter the COUNT (MAJOR, *disguised*)

FLUK. Mrs. Barlow, this is Count Grawbouski. Hem! Count Grawbouski, Mrs. Barlow. (*the* COUNT *shrugs his shoulders and bows,* MRS. BARLOW *gives a sort of half curtsey, half bob, confused and rather irritated*)

FLUK. Look at that noble wreck. (MRS. BARLOW *looks a*

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little contemptuously at the COUNT, *who strikes an attitude,* R.) Mrs. Barlow, that man is indeed a patriot.

MRS. B. I never knew but one patriot, and he took away father's boots. But what do you want me to do?

FLUK. To come to the point, Mrs. Barlow, you have a two pair back—don't deny it, madam, for I see it in your eye. I have a distinct remembrance too of it's being let to Mr. Goodwin. It is not elaborately furnished, Count; but conscious virtue can sleep anywhere. (COUNT *shrugs his shoulders, and expresses his acquiescence in pantomime*)

MRS. B. Bless the man, what's he doing? Can't he speak English?

COUNT. (*with a shrug*) Leetel.

FLUK. Leetle, Mrs. Barlow, leetle. Understand me, ma'am, that I am responsible for the Count's rent.

MRS. B. But what makes you bring him here of all places?

FLUK. I will not deny, ma'am, the Count is at present under a political cloud. He wishes his whereabouts to be a secret. It would be as well, perhaps, if you called him—say Brown.

MRS. B. What, Count Brown?

FLUK. No, no, with the magnanimity of true greatness, the Count will undertake to waive his title for the present.

MRS. B. (*aside*) Well, it's wrong to refuse money, especially at a time like the present. (*looking at* COUNT) He don't look as if he'd give much trouble, and Alice could talk to him in his native language. Well, I shouldn't like to be an outcast in a foreign land myself. He shall have the room. (*to* FLUKER) Well, sir, if the gentleman don't object to the room being rather small. (COUNT *shrugs his shoulders and shakes his head*)

FLUK. He is satiated with the gilded salons of the Continent, Mrs. Barlow, and pines for the solitude and security of the British bedroom.

MRS. B. And don't mind the Saw Mills at the back? (COUNT *repeats action*)

FLUK. He prefers Saw Mills at the back.

MRS. B. And can put up with the smell of vinegar in the store room, just by. (COUNT *in exaggerated action expresses his utter contempt for the trifling annoyance*)

FLUK. (*proudly*) What's the odour of vinegar to a Grawbouski. Eh, Count? (COUNT *snaps his fingers contemptuously*) Oh, I think we may settle terms at once, ma'am. Would you step this way. (*moving towards shop door*)

MRS. B. (*going, then stopping abruptly*) Wait a minute, my mind misgives me about one thing—cookery. Foreigners are so very particular.

FLUK. Make your mind quite easy, madam; I think, Count, I express your culinary sentiments, when I assure

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Mrs. B. that you are content with the (*with shrug and strong French accent*) Bif-tek, la chop, le sausage. (*the* COUNT *expresses his satisfaction at each article*) Oh yes, ma'am—plain roast and boiled.

MRS. B. Then we can make the gentleman comfortable, I've no doubt.

FLUK. Of course; step this way, ma'am! (*going door*, C.) Yes, very quiet person—yes, yes.

Exeunt MRS. BARLOW *and* FLUKER *into shop; the* COUNT *watches them off, then takes off green spectacles, discovering* BLACKSHAW.

MAJOR. Hang me if I could have stood it much longer—I'm not used to this masquerading—still I'm in Fluker's hands, and I can't help myself—he says I must keep out of the way, and certainly he has shewn some ingenuity in his selection of a hiding place for the unlucky Chairman of the British-Australasian Joint Stock Discount and General Loan Company, who is temporarily "up a tree." I couldn't help the affair going wrong—misfortunes will happen in the best regulated companies! Pleasant to take up a newspaper, and find oneself called a defrauder of the widow and the orphan, and all because the affair turned out a mull. In the great world of speculation it's all a toss up whether you're "a man of great commercial enterprise," or "a monster in human form"—I've come into the latter category. Who's this coming in now? The figure seems familiar. He's chucking a lady customer under the chin—the figure seems *very* familiar. (*goes up*, R.)

Enter PENNYTHORNE, *from shop*.

PENNY. (*talking as he comes in*) Sorry he's out, but he won't be long I dare say! Pleasant series of misfortunes I've had, and no mistake—well, it can't go on much longer: what on earth's come to the business I don't know: and then to put all my eggs in one basket—and such a basket. It's some consolation to know I can't be worse off than I am though; and it's another to know that old Barlow thinks I'm well to do. The old fox thinks he's hooked a rich husband for his dainty doll of a niece. It'll astonish a few of 'em, when they find out I haven't a shilling. It'll teach her a lesson too; a stuck-up, satirical madam. I'll bring her down a peg or two. If it hadn't been for that scoundrel Blackshaw, and his precious Discount Australasian thing-a-my-gig, I could have carried on. But I'll lay my hand upon him some day, the vagabond. (*suddenly finds himself beside* BLACKSHAW, *who is standing perfectly still,* PENNYTHORNE *gives a roar of alarm, and starts back*) Now then, what do you mean by startling parties like that?

COUNT. (R., *shrugging his shoulders*) Pardon.

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PENNY. (L.) Oh, you're a foreigner, are you. I'll let him see. I haven't stayed at Bologne for the month together for nothing. Quel est votre business? Who etes vous? (COUNT *shakes his head*)

PENNY. What ignorant fellers foreigners are. Don't seem to know his own language.

Enter MRS. BARLOW, C. *door.*

MRS. B. If you'll step this way, sir, I'll shew you the room. (*going towards* R. *door*) You'll excuse us, Mr. Pennythorne. (MRS. BARLOW, *going towards* R. *door, motions the* COUNT *to go first*)

COUNT. (*placing his hand on his heart and bowing*) Non, non. Places aux dames. (*repeats* "Places aux dames," *with very English accent*)

MRS. B. (*aside*) Well, I don't think much of his language. *Exit* MRS. BARLOW, R. *door.*

COUNT. (*turning to* PENNYTHORNE *and bowing*) Au revoir, Monsieur Pennisornes.

PENNY. (*loftily*) Oh, tooter twor, tooter twor. (*Exit* COUNT, R. *door.* PENNYTHORNE *takes out his book*) A nice mull I've made of my bets too; I'd have laid my life on "Swindler," bar none, but the brute disappointed the knowing ones, and I stand to lose a little fortune; at least I shan't *stand* to lose it, for if I can't square old Barlow, I shall be off like a shot. Three thousand pounds would set me right, and Alice has all that. (*muses over his book*)

Enter JOE BARLOW, C. *door.*

JOE. (*entering*) No go, old woman, Ned's abroad. Oh, you're not there. (*loudly*) Well, Pennythorne! (*clapping him on the back*—PENNYTHORNE *starts and hides his book*)

PENNY. (R.) Oh, it's you. What a start you gave me. (*aside*) I'll strike whilst the iron's hot. (*turns up,* R.)

JOE. (L.) Pennythorne's my last chance—he's rich, and might assist me. I must get 'em married out of hand, and then, as he's feathered his nest well, a thousand or two will be nothing to him.

PENNY. (*sitting,* R.) I say, Barlow, let's come to the point about Alice.

JOE. With all my heart. (*aside, taking a chair,* R.) What do you propose?

PENNY. Well, for my part, I hate long engagements.

JOE. So do I—so do I!

PENNY. (*aside*) He's in a good humour—it's all right. (*aloud*) Some people, now, would want marriage settlements and lawyer's bills, and rubbish; but between friends——

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JOE. Oh, absurd—absurd! (*aside*) That would expose me at once.

PENNY. (*aside*) I couldn't settle anything.

JOE. And after all, what's money? You're well to do, and can keep my niece like a lady; but still——

PENNY. Yes—yes, and with Alice's trifling fortune——

JOE. He, hem, ha! Whoever gets Alice, gets a treasure.

PENNY. (*aside*) I knew she had a tidy lump, but I daren't press him. (*aloud*) For my part, I despise money—it's Ally I want, not her property.

JOE. (*seizing his hand*) Pennythorne, my worthy friend your sentiments do you honour! I don't look for a rich husband for my niece—give me an industrious steady man like yourself before all your wealthy folks.

PENNY. (*seizing him by the hand*) Joe Barlow, you're a credit to human nature! (*aside, turning off*, R.) He won't care a button when he knows everything. (*puts back chair*)

JOE. (*turning off, aside*) When I explain all to him he won't mind it a brass farden. (*puts back chair*)

Enter ALICE, *door*, R.

JOE. Mr. Pennythorne's been speaking again about his marriage; and he's determined not to wait any longer. (ALICE *starts slightly*)

PENNY. (*advancing to her*) What's the use of putting it off, we don't get any younger, Alice. (*as* PENNYTHORNE *speaks to her*, JOE *watches her*, L., *anxiously*) Come, I haven't behaved badly, many a thin-skinned chap would have had no more to say to a girl, after such conduct as yours; but I'm willing to overlook the past, and I ask you to be mine. It's your uncle's wish. Ain't it, Barlow? Why don't you back a party up when he's breaking down?

ALICE. (C.) Is it—is it your wish, uncle Joe?

JOE. (L., *speaking with an effort*) Yes, yes, Ally. (*aside*) I can't look her in the face. (*aloud*) If you marry him, Ally, you'll—you'll be doing your old uncle a great service, my dear.

ALICE. (R. C., *coldly*) Then it shall be as you wish.

PENNY. Hooray!

ALICE. (*to* PENNYTHORNE) Do not hope that I could ever love you.

PENNY. (R.) Oh, you'll learn to. People who know me thoroughly positively adore me. Uncle-in-law, as is to be, I'll run down to Doctors' Commons at once. Strike whilst the iron's hot. (*crossing*, C., *almost with quiet ferocity to* JOE) Don't you let her change her mind. I won't be trifled with.

JOE. (*fiercely turning on him*) Who's going to trifle with you?

PENNY. There there I didn't mean it. Ta, ta, Alice, love

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(*kisses his hand to her*) I shall be back soon. (*sings*) "Love was once a little boy, heigho! heigho! fal de ral la." *Exit* C. *door.*

JOE. (*in a fidgetty way*) Ally; you were always a good and noble girl. I've loved you like my own child, and if you really shrink from marrying him, I'll brave want—disgrace—anything rather——

ALICE. Listen to me, uncle Joe, now that we are alone; in your heart of hearts, do you wish for this marriage?

JOE. Don't ask me in that way, Ally—I—I don't want you to marry Pennythorne—but—nothing else can save me from ruin.

ALICE. And you had so many friends.

JOE. The only friend we have in the world is you, Ally.

ALICE. It must be so then. I will try my best to do my duty by him, but you will be near me, dear uncle Joe, (*takes his hand*) to comfort me upon my cheerless path. I shall see you often, and hear your kind encouraging voice. You won't leave me, uncle Joe—you won't leave me. (*clasps her arms around him*)

JOE. Don't take it to heart so, my child. I'm sure you'll be happy.

Enter GERALD, *at door,* L.—*he is very quietly dressed.*

JOE. (L. C., *who has been caressing* ALICE, *and stroking her hair*) Gracious! Mr. Goodwin! (ALICE *shudders*)

GERALD. (R.) I beg your pardon. I fear I have called at an inopportune moment.

JOE. (L.) No, no. (*releases* ALICE *and shakes her hand, aside, as if to re-assure her*)

GERALD. But I heard that I should find you in, from Mr. Pennythorne, whom I met as I was coming here. (*looks at* ALICE, *who shuns his gaze, drooping her head*)

JOE. You've found your way here at last then.

GERALD. I fear I am an unwelcome visitor even now; but I will only inflict my presence upon you for a very short time. I am about to go abroad. (ALICE, R., *gives a slight start*) for some years. I could not leave England without one word—(*with emotion*) one word of farewell, Alice. To that farewell, I may now add a deep and fervent wish for your happiness in your—(*slight pause*) married life. I can scarcely think this match is one of your own choice, still that choice I had no right to question.

JOE. Gerald Goodwin, I'll be plain with you. My niece loved you deeply—truly. You said you loved her—you know how you behaved? Then when, with the forgiving heart of a loving woman, she offered all her little fortune to retrieve your honour, you kept away from her—forgot her.

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ALICE. (*touching his arm, aside*) Uncle Joe!

GERALD. I never knew she had a farthing till that moment. Was it for me when I was once more a beggar to come and seek her? No! Could I, after the way in which I had treated her, come and pray to be forgiven? What would you have said then? But enough of this—Alice, farewell!

ALICE. (*to* JOE, *aside*) He never knew till then that I had money, uncle Joe. He does not know now that we are poor.

JOE. (*aside*) Well, well, it's best as it is—it's best as it is.

Enter MRS. BARLOW, *hurriedly, from* R., *in a great state of agitation.*

MRS. B. Joe, Joe—oh, Joe! (*sits on sofa, up* R., *and appears faint*)

JOE. Here, fetch your aunt a glass of water, Ally. What is it, my dear?

MRS. B. No, never mind. Oh, Joe, the disgrace! the disgrace! (*buries her head in her hands*)

JOE. What disgrace? Speak out?

MRS. B. It's an execution, Joe—the bailiffs. Oh, to think that I should live to see this day!

JOE. (R., *overcome, aside*) It's come! it's come! (*patting her on the back*) Never mind; cheer up, old woman—it'll all come right.

MRS. B. (R. C., *clasping his hand*) Oh, Joe, you never told me it was as bad as this.

GERALD. (L.) Mrs. Barlow! Alice! what does all this mean?

JOE. (R.) It means that I have been a scoundrel.

ALICE. (L. C.) It means that uncle Joe has been unfortunate—very unfortunate—that we are—beggars.

GERALD. Why I have always understood——

ALICE. (L. C.) I know! I know!—you were mistaken. My money has been lost, and uncle Joe's as well.

JOE. Every penny, Gerald Goodwin, every penny; and the bailiffs a sittin' like a inkybus in the shop.

GERALD. I'm in a maze! Oh, this must not be—shall not be! Uncle Desborough, though a strange and headstrong man, has a good heart, and he shall know of this at once. He heard of your noble conduct, Alice, and he will never suffer this. (*rcossing*, R. C.) Bear up, my kind old friend! Alice, cheer them both; and, take my word for it, this misfortune shall be averted. (*excitedly*) Alice! Alice! I've got a thousand things to say, but I can't say them now—wait just a little; I'll soon be back. Here, get out of the way! (*pushing aside* GIBBONS, *who has entered*, L.)

GIBBONS. We're in no particular hurry, Mr. Barlow, and we'll wait in the shop till you're more composed. (*aside to*

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ALICE, *who has followed* GERALD *to door*) Tell him to bear up, miss; bless your innocent 'art, it's nothing when you're used to it. *Exit*, C.

ALICE. Don't be cast down, uncle Joe; something assures me that Gerald can assist you through it. You saw how pained and surprised he was at the sudden discovery of your misfortune.

JOE. Ah! there was a reassuring tone about his manner, Ally, and he may be able to do something. His voice sounded cheery, old girl, and it's a pleasanter voice than —

PENNY. (*heard in shop*) All in, eh! that's all right.

JOE. A pleasanter voice than Pennythorne's.

Enter PENNYTHORNE—ALICE'S *back is towards him*—MRS. BARLOW'S *head is in her hands, and* JOE *is sitting looking at the ground.*

PENNY. (L., *singing*) "Oh there's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream." I flew away in such a precious hurry on the wings of love, Alice, that I forgot Doctors' Commons would be shut afore I could get there; when I found how late it was, I turned back to come and spend a pleasant evening. (*sings*) "For there's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dre"—well, you're a lively family group, you are. (*pause*) Blest if you ain't like the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Two-swords. Now then, you rollicking old ile and colourman, what's the matter?

ALICE. (C., *comes to him*) Mr. Pennythorne, since you left us just now, we have suffered a great blow.

PENNY. Who's been hittin' any of you? Only tell me—don't mind confiding in me, I'll stick by you.

JOE. (*in chair*, R., *aside to* MRS. BARLOW) Pennythorne says he'll stick by us. He don't care for money. He's a good fellow after all's said and done.

MRS. B. (*in arm chair*) I always said he was, but you never believed me.

PENNY. I hate your unsympathetic humbugs. Give me the heart that can feel for another (*aside*) Some near relation popped off, I suppose.

ALICE. (L. C.) You see uncle Joe meant all for the best; but he has been unfortunate, very unfortunate.

PENNY. (*aside*) Unfortunate with *his* money!—these things will happen.

ALICE. He meant well, but we are all liable to mistakes, and poor uncle Joe made a great and fatal one, when he speculated beyond his means.

PENNY. (*countenance changing*) Speculated beyond his—go on, go on.

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ALICE. You are his friend—his old and valued friend—you will not add to his present anguish by one unkind word—you will stand by him now that he is well nigh broken-hearted—now that he is ruined. You have always said you did not care for money. You have been prudent and lucky, and you can assist poor uncle Joe in his present trouble. (*with downcast looks*) I have often spoken to you harshly, rudely, and I ask your forgiveness—If—if—you care for me as you have always said—you will—(*looks at him*) stretch forth a generous hand and help——(*the expression of* PENNYTHORNE'S *face stops her—she pauses*)

PENNY. (*after a slight pause, in a quiet voice*) Is this real or sham? It's no get up to try me, is it?

ALICE. It is too real. We have lost every shilling, irretrievably, and are little better than beggars.

PENNY. (*still in a constrained quiet tone*) And *your* money?

JOE. (*at back*) Gone, Pennythorne, gone—every farthing!

PENNY. (*with his hands in his pockets, and in a loud voice*) Well, you're a nice lot! This is pretty disgraceful abominable conduct, this is. You'd have tricked me beautiful. I don't wonder at your wanting to hurry on the match; no, nor you either, with your palavering speeches, now it's no longer any good playing the high and mighty. (ALICE *is dumfoundered, and unable to speak*)

MRS. B. Joe, I must speak.

JOE. Be quiet. (*to* PENNYTHORNE) Why you always declared you despised money.

PENNY. And you been in business for forty years and fool enough to believe me! I can't find words to express my contempt for you.

MRS. B. Joe, I *will* speak.

JOE. Be quiet, you silly woman, you.

PENNY. You're a parcel of swindlers altogether, pretending to have money when you haven't a shilling. Tell you what it is, Mr. Barlow, you're an impostor, that's what *you* are. (*approaches almost menacingly to* JOE)

ALICE. (*interposing and turning upon* PENNYTHORNE) Leave the house, sir! (*pointing to door*)

PENNY. Eh!

ALICE. Leave the house, I say, and never dare to set your foot in it again; yonder lies your road; take it, ere I summons those who will thrust you like a cur into the street. Go!

PENNY. (*abashed and slinking towards door*) I'm—I'm going. (*aside*) What a fury! (*to* ALICE *who has retired up*) Good bye, you—you hyæna—you— A nice time I should have had with *you* too. (*finds himself close to* GIBBONS *who has entered* C. *door*) GIBB. I beg your pardon. Is your name Pennythorne, Livery Stable-keeper, and setterer?

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PENNY. Course it is.

GIBB. Sorry for it, but I must arrest you at the suit of Slangem & Co.

PENNY. What!

JOE. (*crossing*, R. C.) Arrest him! there's some mistake. He's a wealthy man.

GIBB. Well, his creditors will be only too happy to 'ear it. He's up to his eyes in debt with all his tradesmen, his paper's everywhere, he got a bill of sale on his furniture, and won't he find a precious long list of detainers, after he's been an hour in Cursitor-street, that's all. Wealthy, why he's only been staving off people by telling 'em he was going to marry a heiress.

ALICE. (L.) Can it be possible?

JOE. (R. C. *jumping*) Why, you rascally swindler, what do you mean? Pretending to have money when you haven't a shilling. I tell you what it is, Mr. Pennythorne, you're an impostor, that's what *you* are.

MRS. B. (R., *quietly*) Pennythorne, I always *thought* you were a scoundrel.

JOE. (R. C.) Ho, ha! ho! That's good. (*to* PENNYTHORNE) Ha, ha! I don't wonder at your wanting to hurry on the match. Ha, ha! we're well rid of each other, my worthy friend. (*crosses*, R.)

PENNY. (C., *back*) That's right, trample on me. Kick a fallen tower when he's down. Lead me to your Sponging Establishment, Officer of the Sheriff, where you charge eighteen pence for a sheet of note paper, and half-a-crown a day for the pen and ink. But you won't get much out of me. I don't want to play the swell at a guinea a minute, and shall go to prison, I shall feel at home *there*, so

Farewell, Barlow, till we meet,
Within the walls of Whitecross Street.

Exit PENNYTHORNE *and* GIBBONS.

JOE. There's a mean-spirited 'ound, a letting himself down to talk poetry.

ALICE. Never mind him, uncle Joe, he isn't worth your anger.

Enter PYEFINCH, *hurriedly and out of breath, door* L.

PYEF. (*down*, L.) Here, I say! Where—where's Mr. Goodwin?

ALICE. Has anything happened?

PYEF. Anything? Ha, ha! it's according to what you cal anything. I should think so. But where is he?

ALICE. He left here some little time back, promising to return shortly.

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PYEF. I heard he was here, and master's sent me post haste after him.

Enter COUNT, *door* L.—*he pauses abruptly on seeing* PYEFINCH.

COUNT. (*aside*) Why, that's Goodwin's man—I've tumbled into pleasant quarters here. It's like everything that Fluker does, he always makes a botch of it.

JOE. I thought his uncle never wanted to see him again.

PYEF. So everybody imagined. But blood's stronger than water, and Mr. Desborough's a good sort, notwithstanding his odd temper. Look at his taking me when his nephew bust up, and making me his own man. Lucky thing, too, after I'd lost all my savings in that atrocious Blackshaw's twenty per cent. paying swindle. You see, Mrs. Desborough, the young wife as master married in India——

ALICE. Yes.

PYEF. Well it was an ill-assorted match from the first, and Mrs. Desborough, not to put too fine a point upon it, has——

JOE. Well.

PYEF. (L.) He-loped. Well, you see, master is sixty-six or so, and his wife not more than twenty-four. Take twenty-four from sixty-six and what remains?

COUNT. (*aside*) Mrs. Desborough doesn't, evidently.

PYEF. (*turning to him*) I beg your pardon, what did you remark? wasn't aware that strangers was present. (*speaks aside to* JOE)

ALICE. (*down* R. *a little*) If they should be reconciled once more, and Gerald not go abroad but stay at home, and—— But no, that can never, never be now.

Re-enter GERALD, C.

PYEF. Here he is.

GERALD. (L. C.) I haven't been to Harley Street, but I have seen the agent who is directed to pay my passage money and allowance; and for the present that may suffice until we can arrange matters.

PYEF. Beg pardon, sir. Letter, sir—your uncle. (*gives him letter*) Most important. Hem! most important.

GERALD. My uncle? He is not—not——

PYEF. Oh dear no, sir, more alive than ever, especially to the fact of having a nephew. *Exit*, L. *door*.

GERALD. (L.) What can this mean? I feel a strange foreboding of more ill fortune, I cannot read it.

ALICE. I'll read it for you then.

GERALD. Do, Alice. (*aside*) What further blow can fate have now in store for me?

ALICE. (*reads*) "My dear nephew Gerald,—My short delusive

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dream of happiness is over, and I awake to the bitter and sorrowful reality. I am alone now—alone with none to turn to but *you*, my poor wronged boy. I spurned you—you my dead sister's only child; and in my shame and grief I pray you, I implore you, to return to me. I may yet in some measure atone for the past; to do so will be the sole aim and object of my remaining years. I can write no more than this; forgive, and *come* to me." Oh, you will go to him, Gerald—you will confort him in his bitter shame and sorrow—do not hesitate. You will overlook his past neglect—you do not know what influences may have been at work. You will forget and forgive, Gerald, and go to him at once—at once.

GERALD. Yes, (*taking her hand*) I will, on one condition—it is that you go with me, Alice.

ALICE. (C.) Gerald.

GERALD. (L.) It would be mere pretence were I to feign blindness to the tenour of that letter; fortune once more smiles upon me, but it will be valueless indeed unless shared by you. I have suffered long and bitterly for my wicked folly of a year ago, you urge me to return good for evil; set me the example, Alice, and once more say that you will be my wife.

ALICE. (*looking timidly round*) Oh, dear, before everybody too.

JOE. (R. C., *turning to* MRS. BARLOW) There! what do you say to that, old lady? if that isn't your notion of nobility of soul, I should like to know your idea of what is?

MRS. B. Bless his heart; *I always loved him from the first.*

JOE. He—hem! Ally. (ALICE *goes to* JOE) Now, Ally, my dear, don't beat about the bush—out with it.

ALICE. Gerald! (*giving him her hand*)

GERALD. My own love! (*embraces her*)

JOE. (*embracing* MRS. BARLOW) My blessed old Susan!

(COUNT *comes down* L. *of* GERALD)

COUNT. (*aside*) It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, and nothing venture nothing win. (*taps* GERALD *on the shoulder—* GERALD *turns,* COUNT *takes his arm and leads him a step or two,* R.; *and whispers in his ear*) I'm Blackshaw—hush! I came here to hide from my creditors, but I've tumbled into a hornet's nest. Don't believe all you hear against me. It was all Charker's doing, and I haven't had a shilling of the money—the scoundrel threw me over with the rest. I lent you a trifle once—you've got your passage money and some of your allowance in your pocket. You're on your legs again—I'm in Queer-street. Lend me the money and I'll go to Australia instead of you. Your honeymoon will be none the less happy from the knowledge that you've done a kindly turn to a poor devil down on his luck.

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GERALD. (R.) You're right, Blackshaw. May you live to to retrieve the errors of the past.

MAJOR. You shall not regret this generous act, Goodwin.

GERALD. You shall pay me back—when——

MAJOR. Yes——

GERALD. When you've earned it.

MAJOR. Never earned anything in my life. Never had time. (*goes up*, L.)

Enter FLUKER, *door*, C.

FLUK. (L. C.) Charker's captured! Captured, sir, at Dover, just on the very point of starting for the Continent, "One foot on land, and one on shore," as the poet says.

JOE. (R. C.) That feller a Count? Why I thought he was the man in possession.

FLUK. Yes, a woman was at the bottom of it all. It certainly is very remarkable that you should be here.

GERALD. (R. C.) Why?

FLUK. Well, he was always at Mr. Desborough's—never away from the house—fishing after the hundred thousand pounds, you know; but your uncle never liked him—no, he never took your uncle—never; but he—a—yes—he—a—took your aunt.

GERALD. Impossible!

FLUK. Only as far as Dover. The creditors will get most of their money; and he's had the honesty to absolve Blackshaw—Blackshaw, he declares, is as innocent as a lamb.

COUNT. (*throwing off his wig &c., dancing*) Does he? Then off, villainous disguse! "My foot's upon my native heath—my name's Mc Gregor!"

JOE. Look here, who is he; first he's a bailiff, then he's a count, then he's Mc Gregory. I calls him a regler Hovid's Metamorforus.

MRS. B. (R.) Joe—Joe, we've been forgetting all about our couble.

JOE. Eh! Ah, bless me, so we have

GERALD. (L. C.) So you shall. We'll have no talk of trouble now—a happy future lies before us all.

JOE. (R. C.) You'll never be happy with a hundred thousand pounds!

ALICE. (R. C.) Your uncle shall keep his wealth; Gerald, we shall be happy if we are not too rich. We have seen what money does, so let us be contented with a little—we'll have no grand home; you wouldn't wish your wife to feel strange and out of place—nor shall we desire to dazzle old friends with new display.

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(to Audience) Old friends are truest, such as those we see,
Who joy with us at our prosperity;
Whose kindly cheer to us more welcome sounds,
Than even, oh, *Ten* HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS!

Curtain.

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OLD SOLDIERS.

An Original Comedy,

IN THREE ACTS,

BY

H. J. BYRON.

AUTHOR OF

Weak Woman; Old Sailors; War to the Knife; Cyril's Success; The Old Story; Dundreary Married and Done For; Cinderella; Blue Beard from a New Point of Hue; Robinson Crusoe; Little Don Giovanni; Mazeppa; The Maid and the Magpie, or the Fatal Spoon; The Babes in the Wood; Bride of Abydos; Fra Diavolo; Jack the Giant Killer; Very Latest Edition of the Lady of Lyons; The Nymph of the Lurleyberg; Pilgrim of Love; The Garibaldi Excursionists; Aladdin, or the Wonderful Scamp; Esmeralda, or the Sensation Goat; Goldenhair the Good; Ivanhoe in Accordance, etc.; Beauty and the Beast; Rival Othellos; Whittington and his Cat; Puss in a New Pair of Boots; Miss Eily O'Connor; George de Barnwell; Our Sea-side Lodgings; The Rose-bud of Stinging-nettle Farm; The Sensation Fork; My Wife and I; Beautiful Haidee, or the Sea Nymph and the Sallee Rovers; Ill Treated Il Trovatore; The Motto; "I am all there!" St. George and the Dragon; Lady Belle Belle; Orpheus and Eurydice, or the Young Gentleman who charmed the Rocks; 1863, or the Sensations of the Past Year; Mazourka, or the Stick, the Pole, and the Tartar; The "Grin" Bushes; Lion and the Unicorn; Sensation Dramas, or the Back Drawing Room; Princess Springtime, or the Envoy that Stole the King's Daughter; La Sonnambula! or the Supper, the Sleeper, and the Merry Swiss Boy; Pan; Lucia di Lamimermoor; Pandora's Box; A Hundred Thousand Pounds; William Tell with a Vengeance; or the Pet, the Patriot, and the Pippin; Lucretia Borgia, M.D.; The Lancashire Lass; Enchanted Wood; Not such a Fool as he Looks; Lord Bateman, or the Proud Young Porter and the Fair Sophia; The Corsican Bothers, or the Troublesome Twins; Eurydyce, or Little Orpheus and his Lute; An English Gentleman; Daisy Farm; Prompter's Box; Orange Tree and the Humble Bee; Robert Macaire's Camaralzaman; Partners for Life; Tottles: Dearer than Life; Good News; Wait and Hope; Uncle Dick's Darling; Sour Grapes; Haunted Houses; Fine Feathers; Lady of the Lane; Old Chums; Bohemian Gyurl; Little Don Cæsar de Bazan; The Bull by the Horns; Married in Haste; Blow for Blow; Oil and Vinegar; An American Lady; Our Boys; Little Doctor Faust; Guinea Gold; A Fool and his Money; &c., &c.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
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89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
PUBLISHERS,
28, WEST 23RD STREET.

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First produced at the Strand Theatre, January 25th, 1873.

Dramatis Personæ:

Lionel Leveret (*a young Country Gentleman*)... MR. H. J. BYRON

Cassidy (*his Servant, formerly in the Army*) ..... MR. E. TERRY

Captain McTavish (*unattached*) ..... MR. W. H. VERNON

Gordon Lockhart (*attached*) ..... MR. J. H. BARNES

Major Fang..... MR. C. H. STEPHENSON

Mr. Mawker (*a Collector*) ..... MR. H. CARTER

Kate McTavish (*Captain McTavish's only Daughter*) ..... MISS ADA SWANBOROUGH

Mary Moss..... MISS KATE BISHOP

Mrs. Major Moss (*Widow and Woman of the World*) ..... MRS. RAYMOND

ACT I. ..... RECRUITS.

SCENE.—Outside of Leveret's Cottage, Devonshire.

ACT II. ..... VETERANS.

SCENE.—The Same.

Three Weeks are supposed to have passed.

ACT III. ..... MUTINEERS.

SCENE.—Inside Leveret's Cottage.

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OLD SOLDIERS.

SCENE.—*The grounds and house of* MR. LEVERET. *Elegant cottage ornée with porch,* R. H., *covered with roses, honeysuckles, etc.; door facing* L. H., *practicable; window above door; ditto facing audience (practicable). Entrances behind house,* R. H., *and through gate,* L. U. E. *View of. Double garden seat,* L., *by first wing.*

Enter MAJOR FANG; *he looks about, then comes down,* C.

FANG. Ha, pretty place enough. Doocid pretty place. Small, but compact. Just the retreat for a bachelor; and, by Jove! if all I hear of Mr. Leveret is correct, a *retreat* is the very sort of place he would be likely to affect. How different from his father, old Frank Leveret, as severe an old martinet, as dare-devil a rider, and as reckless an old boy altogether as ever—(*opening empty card case*) Confound it! I haven't a card—how shall I— (CASSIDY *heard singing,* R.H.) Who's that? Not Leveret, *I'll* be— (*goes up,* C.) P'raps some Hibernian visitor, who——

Enter CASSIDY *behind house, with chair and hammer.*

CAS. Mornin', your honour.

FANG. Morning, my man.

CAS. Sure I'm not *your* man, at laste, not to my knowledge.

FANG. Servant to Mr. Leveret, I presume—body servant.

CAS. Ye may say body and *sowl* sarvant, and spake no lie. I'm a little of all sorts. His omnibus gatherum, sir.

FANG. A Latin scholar, eh?

CAS. No, sir, an old soldier.

FANG. I knew it. Of course, you're an old soldier.

CAS. And you're another.

FANG. Right. Major Fang, late of the 7th.

CAS. (*with military salute*) Long life to your honour. I knew you'd been in the arramy the moment I clapt eyes on you.

FANG. How so?

CAS. Sure, there's a kind of 'lectricity lights up in a man's bosom when he comes across the ould familiar face of a companion in *arrums;* you don't recollect *me,* your honour, for I was a mere nobody. I only fought for my country at a shilling a day, and when I calculated the chances of being shot, I reckoned it about three fardens a bullet, and that's raisonable, anyhow. Corporal Cassidy, sir, of the same regiment as your honour. (*again salutes him*)

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FANG. I remember you well, now, Cassidy, and also the act of bravery which almost cost you your life. Shake hands, old friend.

CAS. (*awkwardly*) Your honour, I——

FANG. Rubbish! Hang distinctions between old soldiers! (*shakes hands*; *aside*) When one's left the service.

CAS. And you've come to see masther, sir. Do you know him?

FANG. Never saw him. Like his father?

CAS. Yes, sir, in one respect. Benevolence! Bedad, he'd give away the boots off his feet to a barefooted beggar. The tramps makes his risidence a house of call; and it's a question if the postman isn't going to employ a *carrt* to bring the begging letthers that come ivvery morning.

FANG. Ah, he's all heart, I suppose.

CAS. A regular summer cabbage for *that*, sir. He can't say "*no*"—it isn't in him. If it wasn't for a spark of the old fire of his father, that I've seen light up in his eye sometimes, when he's heard of anything *crule* or ty-*rannous*, I couldn't have carried out my promise.

FANG. Your promise?

CAS. Made to his father, the ould Colonel, rest his memory! I was beside him when he was dyin', Major, and he turned to me—(for he'd no frinds round him, and he knew I'd ha' spilt the last drop in my veins for *him* or *his*)—says he: "I'm a brave man, Phil,"—he always called me Phil, bless him!—"I'm a brave man," says he; "but my boy, my Lionel, I'm afraid he's a coward. I'm afraid he's wake and easy led, and too tinder-hearted for this wicked, knowing, cunning, decateful *worrld*. Go to him, Phil; stick by him; you're a poor humble fellow, but you're as honest as any lord in the land, and you've got a sharp eye and a clear head, and you'll promise me to stick true and faithful to *my boy*." And so I have, sir, and so I will, plase Heaven, till one or other of us gets promotion by-and-bye.

FANG. Glad to find my old friend's son has such an excellent guardian, so firm a friend. In fact such a "Fidus Achates."

CAS. (*aside*) What's he mane by "fried his pittatees?" Some outlandish gibberish or other.

FANG. And the contrast is so great between your master and his father, eh?

CAS. Master's wakeness itself, and the best of it is, he thinks he's as *firrum* as a rock. He's a human sandbank as fancies he's a Gibberalther. A soft word'll get over him, sir; a whining gipsy'll twist him round his finger; it's as much as I can do to protect him from the ladies as showers

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slippers on him by the dozen, from the ould women with mittens and the asthma, and the curates as comes a collecting for village schools as nivver get built. Oh, his tormintors is a dale of throuble to me.

FANG. The neighbouring marriageable ladies especially, eh?

CAS. Bless their little hearts, if it wasn't for me he'd have been carried off under my nose, and married twinty times.

FANG. And no particular one he——

CAS. Look here, Major; you're arksing me a good many questions—ye'll pardon me being plain spoken, but are you frindly disposed; are you——

FANG. As true a friend as *you* are, Cassidy—but I daresay I *do* seem inquisitive. (*going up*, L.) I—a— (*looking off*, L. U. E.) Who's that fine looking young woman there? Is she a——

CAS. Oh, that's Miss McTavish along of her father. Bah! (*turns away*)

FANG. You don't care for him, eh?

CAS. No, Major, I don't care for a man who trates his inferiors like *dirrut*, and walks into a shop for two-penn'orth of snuff as if he was going to *storrum* the ramparts, nor yet one as roughly pushes aside a little child with his stick like a mongrel, and's for ever bragging about his noble ancestors, though, bedad, he ought to be proud of *thim*, for it's purty sure he manufactured thim himself. No, sir, I don't care for Captain McTavish by no manner of manes.

MAJOR *and* CASSIDY *go up talking*, R. H. *Enter* CAPTAIN MCTAVISH, *by gate*, L. U. E. *Walks to* R. H. C.

MCT. (*down* R., *then to seat*) Hem! Hang women, they never ought to go out. Turkish system best. Keep 'em at home. Can't walk, can't walk. (*crosses to* L., *puts foot on seat, dusts his boots with handkerchief. To seat*, L. C.)

FANG. There's something to drink my health with, Cassidy. (CASSIDY *goes to chair and commences nailing vine to verandah; at back*) I'll call again when the present visitors have gone. (*aside, crossing*, L.) Fancy I've seen the fellow somewhere. Cassidy was right in his summing up of him, I believe. I—I don't like his *back*. (*Exit by gate*, L. U. E.)

MCTAVISH *peeps into window, then into door; goes to window*, R.

CAS. (*aside*, R.) What's he peerin' and spyin' about?

MCT. (*turns*) Ah! Master in?

CAS. (*on chair*) No!

MCT. Out?

CAS. Always is—when he isn't in. It's a way he's got.

MCT. (*crosses, R.*) Hath [illegible] walked so fast then

Enter KATE MCTAVISH, L. U. E.

McT. You've taken your time.

KATE. (L. C., *and sits*) Papa, you strode along so fast. Quite a military quick step, you know.

McT. (*going to seat*) Old habit; can't get rid of it. We old soldiers believe in rapidity of action, eh, Corporal? (*turning*, R.)

CAS. Some on 'em do, whin the innimy's behind.

McT. A disgraceful innuendo—implies fear. You don't mean to say you ever felt fear?

CAS. (C.) Faix, and I did. The first time I was in arkshun, I never left off being frightened out of my life, till I'd frightened the life out of a couple of other blackguards. Thin I felt more myself.

KATE. (*seated*, L.) Oh, how dreadful! Going to war can't be excused.

CAS. Thrue for ye, miss, that's why we're obligated to do it.

McT. (L. C.) If I had my way, I'd have a military law to shoot all cowards off hand.

CAS. (*aside*) That's unselfish, anyhow.

McT. (*crosses to* L.) We'll wait your master's return.

CAS. Don't think he'll be in for some time.

McT. (*sitting*, L.) We'll *wait* some time.

CAS. (*aside*) He'll stop. It's no use. Once he arrives on the premises, bedad, he's like black bates—you nivver get rid of him. (*Exit by gate*, R. U. E., *singing*)

KATE. I like that man, he's a character.

McT. Of course. Every one who's rude as a rule, and civil as the exception is a *character* with *you*.

KATE. I don't care for milksops, I admit; give me brains. A man without character is as bad as——

McT. A woman without one, eh? (*crosses*, R. C.) Come, your strong-minded rubbish is all very well so long as it doesn't interfere with *my* views. (*going to her*, C.) Let me tell you strong-minded women don't get married. Men admire something more yielding, gentle and winning; *you* could be all these if you chose, but you refuse (*rises*), and I tell you, madam, I won't have it, damme, I——

KATE. *What*, father, do you forget that there are people about who will hear your threatening voice? We are not at home, remember, where you can revile me to your heart's content without interruption.

McT. You're a disobedient, irritating, maddening girl—and—and—you'll lay me on a bed of sickness with your obstinacy—my old wound is troubling me again—then you'll be satisfied, and after all I've done for you. Oh, ingratitude, thy name is—a—Kate McTavish. (*takes* R. H. C.)

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KATE. (c.) All you have done! You do well to speak of that. Done your best to make me break my word—and done your worst to make me break my heart.

McT. *Heart!* I thought strong-minded women despised that organ. Looked on it physiologically like *money*—as a capital *circulating medium*—nothing more; a sort of Crewe Junction for the veins and arteries; a necessary, but by no means romantic institution.

KATE. You try to sneer away the subject in my thoughts; you can sneer away—you are clever at it, father, very clever.

McT. The subject! Gordon Lockhart. A pretty subject. An adventurer.

KATE. Ah, but there are adventurers *and* adventurers—as *you* ought well to know.

McT. I should like to hear the distinction.

KATE. There are those who seek their *own* fortune, and those who seek the fortunes of other people. Which is the despicable party?

McT. The one who fails, of course. (*pompously*)

KATE. But the one who secures his *own*——

McT. Rubbish! The one who secures the other *makes it* his own—same result in either case.

KATE. You mean that. Else, why have you dragged me throughout the Continent and exhibited me, labelled, as it were, for sale—and failing everywhere in your wretched object, brought me here as a decoy duck, as a——

McT. Madam! I will not *permit* you— (*quietly*) Besides—Mr. Lockhart's conduct—his abrupt departure—his long silence——

KATE. Yes, father, you are right there. He has slighted me—his temper was always quick, and even ungovernable as—as—*mine* is, and he may think to humble *me* by—no, no, never that, never that! (*takes stage*, R. H.)

McT. Why, of course, of course, you wouldn't have me actually praise a fellow who has——

KATE. (*returning to* R. C.) Not a word *against* him! I won't hear it. Not a syllable. Poor dear boy—*where* is he now?

McT. *Poor* dear boy—there's a *rich* dear boy ready to your hand—that's better—Mr. Leveret, who——

KATE. Compared with Gordon he is——

McT. No more of this. I forbid you ever to mention him again—a scamp—an adventurer, an upstart!

Enter at gate, L. U. E., LIONEL LEVERET.

LEV. (c.) Halloa! Scamp! adventurer! and upstart! why, McTavish, are you talking to yourself?

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McT. (L.) Well, a—a——

Lev. You can't have been addressing Miss Kate, here. (*to* Kate) How are you? (*shakes hands*)

McT. No, I was simply abusing a man I know.

Kate. (R.) Yes. Behind his back.

Lev. Behind his back! Best way, too; for in case of kicking, the *man* is certainly at a disadvantage.

McT. (*aside*) What a son-in-law he'd make. (*retires up*, L. C.) This place would suit me to a T.

Lev. (*to* Kate) I thought you'd come here to-day.

Kate. No, really?

Lev. Yes, I was dreaming of you last night.

Kate. No, *were* you?

Lev. Yes, I always dream after Welsh rabbits.

Kate. Really, I—ha! ha!

Lev. I wonder who invented Welsh rabbits.

McT. Some Welsh-man, I suppose. (*gets more* L.)

Lev. Ah! or some rabbit. Rubbish! I was thinking of something else.

Kate. Not of *me*, then.

Lev. Oh! I'm always thinking of *you*. I (*to* McTavish) don't think much of you. (Kate *laughs*) I mean—I don't ever——

Kate. Oh, don't attempt an explanation.

Lev. I was going to say something rather striking. And even now I've more than half a mind.

Kate. *Have* you? You don't look it.

Lev. Don't chaff a fellow. (Kate *goes up*, R. H.; *aside*) I'd got an answer for her that (*crosses*, L.) would rather have astonished her, only I—forgot it—just at the——

McT. (*to* Leveret, *coming down*, C.) Looks splendid this morning, doesn't she? (*pointing to* Kate, *who is at back*, R., *looking at some flowers*) Lucky the man who gets *her*, for (*sighs*) I suppose some day we must part.

Lev. (L.) Oh, yes, I don't want you *always* here. I mean I don't exactly——

McT. Just so—just so.

Lev. Now, if it was your daughter——

McT. Well—if *then*? (*goes up to* Kate; *to* Kate) Kate, Mr. Leveret will allow you to go in and speak to Mrs. Tomax about that elder wine—you promised me, won't you, Leveret? (Kate *comes down*, R.)

Lev. My dear Miss Kate, my cottage is only too honoured by—a—a——

McT. (*aside to* Kate, R. C.) I want a word with him alone

Kate. (*aside to* McTavish) Father, you are not going to borrow——

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McT. By no means.

KATE. You promised me you——

McT. Do I ever break my word? (KATE, *with a significant sigh, exits into house*, R.) Now, sir, as we old soldiers say—attention. (*left front to* LEVERET) Mark me. I'm not a blind fool. Explain your motives—a—what's your game?

LEV. (L. H.) Leap frog for choice.

McT. (C.) What, sir?

LEV. At least it used to be.

McT. Ha! ha! I see. But it's not in *my* way. Soldiers never give "anybody a back." I mean this: your attentions—your *marked* attentions to my daughter, are the talk of the neighbourhood.

LEV. I'm very sorry—what shall I do to remedy it? Suppose I insult her in public—will that suit you? Call her names. Blows might be exchanged. (*getting up*) I might give you a devilish good thrashing, for instance—that'd settle it pleasantly enough.

McT. No, Lionel—let me call you Lionel. The matter has gone too far now, sir. My honour—my family name—nay, my feelings as a father—demand that this affair must be settled one way or the other.

LEV. Just so; suppose we say the other.

McT. There is no more despicable character than the chartered libertine who roves the world, breaking women's hearts, and bringing their parents' grey hairs in sorrow to—to——

LEV. To the hair dressers. I agree with you.

McT. Your simple nature cannot compass the enormity of the character of a Don Juan, a gay Lothario, a—a— (*with a burst*) Oh, Lionel, she only waits to be asked. (*benevolently*) *I* only wait to be asked.

LEV. Yes, but you're always coming *without* asking. Not, of course, that I——

McT. Say the word, sir, and we never darken your doors again. Nay, we shall leave the place—you shall never see her more—and—— (*going*, R.)

LEV. (*following*) But I *want* to see her more. I don't *want* you both to go away—at least, not *her*, because she mightn't come back again. I know *you would*—you're the sort of fellow who always *does* come back. But Kate's the sort of fellow that——

McT. (*takes his hand*) Kate! you call her *Kate*, and a *fellow*, too—playful familiarity. I see we shall soon understand each other. Now, Lionel, I'm not an advocate for—long engagements.

LEV. *Long engagements*—no, as a *soldier*, you *wouldn't* be.

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McT. What I always say is "come to the *point.*"

Lev. Ah, you say that to the *enemy.*

McT. Why waste time? Now—a—it's a delicate subject; but what little money I have is locked up.

Lev. Locked up—patent safe—that sort of thing.

McT. No, no, foreign securities.

Lev. Ah, I see, *not* safe.

McT. But you're a landed proprietor.

Lev. I'm a proprietor certainly. (*aside*) And I feel I shall be very shortly *landed.*

McT. Now, I demand nothing. I leave all to your sense of what is proper—she is here. I trust to your generosity—take my advice, seize the opportunity. Carpe diem.

(*goes up,* R. C.)

Kate *enters and joins* McTavish. *They talk aside.*

Lev. I've forgotten what Latin I ever knew. Carpe diem. Carpe must be Latin for whiskers. I should rather like him as a father-in-law at—at a distance. Kate McTavish, she's got what I haven't—brains; I've got what she hasn't—money. Well, now putting this and that together—she'd look dooced well at the head of a fellow's table—and——

Kate. (*advancing,* R.) Talking to yourself—I often do so. I'd give something to know the subject of your remarks.

Lev. I was saying I thought you'd look uncommonly well at the head of my table.

Kate. Thanks, I'm sure. So you'd look upon me as an article of furniture, a dessert dish, or a decanter, or a——

Lev. Or a wife, eh?

Kate. Mr. Leveret!

Lev. (*aside*) I'm in for it.

Kate. What *can* you mean? You would experience no difficulty in providing yourself with *that* particular article, I should say.

Lev. Why?

Kate. Because—well, you're rich, and you come of a good family, and you're very good-natured, and, in fact, what we women call "a catch."

Lev. (*aside*) I like this girl, she's so jolly rude. Look here—I've six thousand a year, and I'm a stupid ass. Is the metal sufficient to gild the pill? Will you have me?

Kate. Really, Mr. Leveret, this offer is so unexpected. I own I am not blind to those good qualities which——

Lev. That being the case, I believe I am not premature in saying (*quietly*) you are mine for ever. Would you allow me to impress a —— (*holding her hand*)

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Enter CASSIDY *quickly*, L. U. E.

CAS. (L. C.) Bedad, sir, I've got a surprise for you—a surprise that'll give you such delight that upon my conscience I——

LEV. Look here, Cassidy, I wish you wouldn't rush in like that when I'm just remarking to a lady that she's mine for ever; you wouldn't like it yourself.

CAS. (L. H.) Sure, there's a couple of ladies arksing for you that 'll gladden your eyes when you behold 'em. The old one looks *livelier*, and the young one *lovelier*, than ivver they did whin you was always *beauing* 'em about in Naples.

McT. (*at back*, R., *behind cottage*) What's this?

CAS. Faix! Miss Moss looks her ould self, and that's illigant.

LEV. (*drops* KATE'S *hand*) Miss Moss!

KATE. Miss Moss!

McT. Miss Moss!

CAS. And as for the ould lady, Mrs. Major Moss, she's taken a new lease of her life, and, bedad, that's a repairing one, anyhow. (*goes up*, L. H., *to bow ladies on*)

McT. (*advancing down*, L. H.) Mrs. Major Ross, widow of old double-toothed Moss—the *Walrus*, as he was called. Damme! what's in the wind now? Lionel, do you know these people? (R. *corner*)

LEV. Yes—I met 'em—at least, they met *me*. We—a—met one another—you can't help meeting one another in Naples.

Music till Act. Enter MRS. MOSS, *down* L. C., *from gate*, L. 3 E., *followed by* MARY MOSS, *shewn in by* LEVERET. MARY, L. C.

MRS. M. (C.) Dear me, what a charming place, isn't it, Mary? Quite Arcadian, upon my word. (*turning*, R., *sees* LEVERET) Ha! Mr. Leverot! (*holding out her hand*; LEVERET *passes her, and shakes hands with* MARY, *who has come down*, L. H., *without noticing* MRS. MOSS. KATE *joins her father; they express their annoyance*)

LEV. (*crosses to* L. C.) My dear Miss Moss—Mary—really, I can't find words to express my delight at this unexpected visit. How did you contrive to hunt me up?

McT. (*aside at back*, R.) So they've hunted him *up*, have they?

MARY. Oh, Mr. Leveret, mamma insisted on coming. It was really no wish of *mine*.

KATE. (*aside*, *down* R.) She's fond of him, or she wouldn't snub him the first moment they meet again. (McTAVISH *comes down*, R. C.)

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MARY. But you have visitors—a *lady*——

LEV. Have I?—so I have. (*to* MCTAVISH) By Jove, I'd forgotten *you*. Allow me, Captain McTavish—a—Mrs. Major Moss, Miss Moss, Miss McTavish—a—— (*retires up, c.*)

MRS. M. (*advancing, L. C., to* MCTAVISH) A military man. Delighted. (*holding his hand*)

MCT. Yes, madam. Ha! ha! Old soldiers, *both* of us. (*shakes hands; she starts and turns away, L.H., with a look of surprise*)

MARY. (*advancing to* KATE) Quite charmed to meet some one of my own age, whom I may hope to find a companion. (*offers her hand*) You know Mr. Leveret very well?

KATE. (R.) Intimately; and *you?*

MARY. (C.) Oh, very well indeed! (*they go over to door*)

CAS. (*at back of seat, down, L.*) The fighting there'll be amongst 'em in a wake! Donnybrook Fair 'll be a Quakers' mating to it. (LEVERET *comes down, C.*)

MRS. M. (*aside to* LEVERET, C.) Lionel, beware, a serpent is coiled upon your hearth. A viper is wriggling unsuspected in your bosom. (*turns away and sits down stage, L.H.*)

MCT. (*aside to* LEVERET, *seizing his arm, R.*) Leveret, that elderly woman is a fiend; avoid her as you would a maniacal tigress! (*goes up, R.*)

CAS. (*aside to* LEVERET, L.) Masther, kape your weather eye open, for there's innimies in ambush all around you. (*turns away up, L.*)

KATE. (*coming down to* LEVERET, R., *aside*) If all's true I suspect, I'll never forgive you. (*goes up, R.*)

MARY. (*advancing to* LEVERET, R.) Almost as warm here as it was in Naples, isn't it? (*crosses to chair, L.* LEVERET *is C.*)

Enter PODGER *by gate, L., crosses at back, down, R.*

POD. (*as he enters*) The kind, amiable, soft chap, he's sure to give me something handsome. (R., *to* LEVERET) I'm sure I've only to mention to you the society for the diffusion of moral and instructive little works for——

LEVERET, *who has been chafing under the piled up annoyances of the others, unable to restrain himself, fetches* PODGER *a tremendous kick; he falls into the arms of* CASSIDY, *who has gone down, R. II., as the Collector enters.*

QUICK ACT.

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ACT II.

Same Scene as Act I. Two garden chairs, R. C.

Enter from house, R., MARY MOSS, *followed by* CASSIDY.

MARY. (L.) I can't stay in the room, the atmosphere is simply stifling.

CAS. (R.) And it's not so *warrum* nather. P'raps it's your feelings that overpower you.

MARY. My feelings, Cassidy! What do you mean?

CAS. Sure, we all have 'em. The rawest recruit possesses 'em, as well as the commander-in-chafe. There's something put you out. Don't deny it. Sure, wasn't you the amiablest, gentlest, and most considerate young lady in the *worrld*, when masther and I first clapt eyes on you in forcign *parrts*. The ould lady used to worrit you, and put upon you, and lade you a life, but you nivver mutinied. *Now*, since you've arrived here, you seem to have changed intirely. I take the privilege of ould acquaintanceship, miss, to spake my mind.

MARY. (*seated,* L. C.) I always used to enjoy a chat with you, Cassidy; always respected you for your devotion to your master.

CAS. Ah! he's a man to be devoted *to*, isn't he, miss?

MARY. How should *I* know?

CAS. You've arrived here in the nick of time.

MARY. How so?

CAS. Some of 'em 'll carry him off, if you don't interfere.

MARY. I! I—interfere! Cassidy, really you——

CAS. There's no one in the *worrld* can if *you* can't. Sure, he's been a different man since he met *you*.

MARY. (*impetuously*) Then why did he——

CAS. (*turns sharply*) *What*, miss?

MARY. Nothing. I don't know—I— (*aside*) I wish mamma would come; I *hate* stopping here. (CASSIDY *goes up to* L. H.)

LEVERET *enters from house,* R. H.

LEV. (R.) I say, look here, you know, why do you run away?

MARY. "Running away" is a subject on which Mr. Leveret of all people should be silent.

CAS. That's thrue. His father never did it.

LEV. (C.) Cassidy.

CAS. (*up,* L.) Your nonour. (*salutes*)

LEV. Would you object to going to the devil?

CAS. Oh, not in the laste. (*Exit,* L. 3 E.)

LEV. I say, you know, what do you mean?

MARY. (L. *Sits*) Well, you retired from Naples rather suddenly. Didn't even say good-bye. Not that it signified,

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only it seemed *strange* after—after all your protestations of —of friendship.

LEV. I was *called* away. Telegraphed for.

MARY. Something very important?

LEV. Very. (*sits by her*)

MARY. What was it?

LEV. I needn't say.

MARY. You won't.

LEV. I—I'd rather not

MARY. Then I won't ask you.

LEV. Thank you.

MARY. Still you might have called.

LEV. So I did.

MARY. Why did we not see you?

LEV. Because you weren't up.

MARY. Did you call in the middle of the night, then?

LEV. No. If I had you'd have been up.

MARY. How so?

LEV. Because you were at a ball.

MARY. At which you were not. Some more important engagement.

LEV. Much more. If *I* was not at the ball, some one else *was*.

MARY. Who was that?

LEV. Jones.

MARY. A pale wretch with red hair?

LEV. No, a black brute with *brown*.

MARY. You mean Lord Linnett's secretary.

LEV. No, I don't; was he a Jones, too? You seem to have mixed your Joneses a good deal that evening.

MARY. Would you have had me return home at twelve like a school girl?

LEV. No. Would you have had me neglect the call of duty like a cad?

MARY. No.

LEV. Very well, then.

MARY. Very well, then. (*rises*)

LEV. (*rising, and going,* R. C.) You see it only wanted a little pleasant explanation to set matters again as they used to be.

MARY. And how's that?

LEV. I don't know if *you* don't.

MARY. But you haven't expressed any contrition; asked my pardon——

LEV. But I haven't done anything wrong.

MARY. But you haven't told me anything—what you've done since we last met.

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LEV. I haven't done anything.

Enter MRS. MOSS *from house*, R. H.

MARY. This Miss McTavish could tell a different story.

LEV. I daresay Jones could favour me with a few interesting facts. I beg your pardon—*both* Joneses. Rouge et noir—not a bad game, is it?

MARY. (*aside*) He never cared for me. (*goes up*, C.)

LEV. (*aside*, C.) Glad I was never fool enough to propose to *her*. How she'd have laughed at me. (*follows* MARY *up*, L.C.)

MRS. M. (*at door*) They're billing and cooing. I knew five minutes' explanation would settle it. Don't go, Mary. (*in military manner*) Mary Moss, *do not go*. (*to* LEVERET) What a charming place you have here!

LEV. (R. C., *coming down*) Awfully pleased you like it, I'm sure.

MRS. M. (*sits*, R., *by door*) I could make it my home for ever.

LEV. I couldn't. (MARY *crosses at back to* R.)

MRS. M. Not make it your *home?*

LEV. No—yours! (*sitting*, R., *but* L. *of* MRS. MOSS)

MRS. M. Oh!

MARY. (*aside*) Mamma! mamma!

MRS. M. (*quells her by a look*) Delightful house, and furnished exquisitely; but there's one thing it wants—a wife.

LEV. I never heard of a married house.

MRS. M. Every man when he's arrived at a certain time of life should settle; and no man can be said to be settled till he's married, and that——

LEV. Settles him, eh? I quite agree with you.

MRS. M. (*aside*) That's all right. He only wants leading on. He's burning to declare his affection, I know. It's a charity to help him.

LEV. I'm getting on. I'm eight-and-twenty.

MRS. M. High time you were——

MARY. Really, mamma——

LEV. I'm rich—pretty good-tempered——

MRS M. Amiability itself!

LEV. And I agree with *you*. If I ever am to get married, *now's* the time to do it.

MRS. M. Certainly, no time like the present—eight-and-twenty; now, you should select someone, say, about eight years younger, and——

LEV. I have. (*rises, puts chair back by house*)

MARY. (*aside*) I'll never accept him under *these* circumstances; I could sink into the earth with humiliation. Mamma, I really——

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MRS. M. Mary, dear Mary, I beg you will— (MARY *goes up*, R. H.) You see, poor thing, she can't bear the trial.

LEV. I think you'll approve my choice.

MRS. M. Oh, Lionel, your taste was always indisputable!

LEV. And though I must say I can't altogether swallow the parent——

MRS. M. Lionel, believe me, *I* shall never mar your domestic felicity. No mother-in-law shall play the part of fifth wheel in *your* family coach, be sure.

LEV. No, it's a father-in-law I'm afraid of.

MRS. M. What do you mean, sir? I *never* intend marrying again.

LEV. (*aside*, L. C.) Hang me, if she doesn't think I'm proposing to *her*. (*to* MRS. MOSS) Marry *again*—I should think *not*.

MRS. M. Not that I haven't had offers, *many* offers. Demetrius Moss won my girlish love, and I shall be faithful to his memory. And the lady of your selection is——

LEV. Not a hundred miles from this spot at this moment.

MRS. M. Lionel, dear Lionel, she's *yours*.

LEV. I *know* she is.

MARY. What does he say? The insolent, self-conceited——

LEV. At least she's *said* so.

MRS. M. The artful puss to keep it dark.

LEV. And her father consents.

MRS. M. Her father! Why, he's been dead these ten years.

LEV. *Has* he though! Well, he's concealed the fact very carefully. Anything livelier at luncheon I never wish to see.

MRS. M. (C.) What do you mean?

LEV. (L. C.) I mean that Captain McTavish has given his consent——

MRS. M. What!

LEV. And as the lady's father——

MRS. M. McTavish her father! What do you mean by so disgraceful and shameful a remark? Oh, shade of Demetrius Moss, can I endure this?

LEV. (*aside*) I thought she was going rather freely at that Moselle. (*to her*) I suppose if Kate McTavish doesn't object——

MRS. M. What's she got to do with it?

LEV. Everything! The bride is generally supposed to be a somewhat necessary adjunct at a wedding. With her absent I fancy there might be some trifling hitch in the ceremony.

MARY. (*aside*) I knew it—and mamma to be so blind. (*comes*, R. C.) Mamma, don't you see? Cannot you understand? Mr. Leveret means to say that he has proposed to

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—has been accepted by Miss McTavish. That he intends marrying her.

LEV. Why, of course; I've been saying so the last five minutes.

MRS. M. (*with frigid politeness*) I beg pardon for my obtuseness, I'm sure.

LEV. Well, you did seem dooced stupid——

MRS. M. Mr. Lionel Leveret, I can only regret that I ever —ever— (*aside*) I can't find words to express my rage. (*turns to* MARY, R.) Nice fools we've been made. I can't trust myself to say what I think of him; *you* do it, Mary. (*goes up, C., waving* LEVERET *aside with her parasol*)

MARY. Mr. Leveret, (*comes to* R. C.) mamma is at a loss for words to express her pleasure at this welcome information. She is delighted that you have selected a lady for your wife who is so eminently fitted to adorn your home, and prove a charming companion to you through life. She hopes you may be happy, and that you will never regret a choice which does so much honour and credit to your good taste in every way. In this good wish I—I—— (*becomes faint, and slightly staggers*)

MRS. M. (*coming down,* L. H.) What's the matter, Mary, my dear? (LEVERET, C., MARY, *sits,* R.)

LEV. Here, Miss Moss—I—you don't seem altogether—— (*goes up to* MARY, *back of chair*)

MARY. (*recovering*) Thank you—nothing. I feel it a little oppressive to-day.

MRS. M. (*aside*) I see. I'll leave them together. If he carries out his plan and— But, thank Heaven, there is one who can advise me; Alexander Fang will give me the benefit of his experience—for the sake of old times he'll assist me. I hear he is coming back shortly—and— (*aside to* LEVERET) I leave my poor child in *your* hands, Lionel. Say something to her—make her laugh—she's so terribly *triste*. (*saunters off slowly by gate,* L. H.)

LEV. (C.) Make her laugh! By Jove, I——

MARY. (*rising*) I will follow mamma, if you please, Mr. Leveret. I'm sure you cannot wish to—— (*crosses to* L. H., *up stage*)

LEV. I say, you know, what's the matter? (*enter* KATE *from house, stands in porch*) Have I said or done anything to— (*turns, and sees* KATE *in doorway,* R.) Hallo! here's the other.

KATE. I hope I am not interrupting a very interesting tête-à-tête. I know when old friends meet they have so much to talk about.

MARY. (L.) Oh, we are not old friends.

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KATE. (R.) I thought you had met before.

MARY. Oh, yes; but one has only to walk down the street to meet any number of people. We certainly happened to be in the same city for some time, and—well, you know what continental acquaintanceship is—indeed, English watering-place friendship amounts to the same thing. You meet at a table d' hôte, at parties, in the street, at the pump-room, or the popular promenade, and you are very pleasant and polite and—nothing more. You return to your home—the acquaintanceship is supposed to cease. Mr. and Miss So-and-So might have been excellent friends at Baden Baden—in Bond Street they pass each other with supercilious indifference. (LEVERET *remains*, C., *watching the two ladies*)

KATE. I, on the contrary, have picked up some of my dearest friends abroad. (*sits*, R.) What's *your* experience, Mr. Leveret?

LEV. (C.) Oh, I've picked 'em *up*—the difficulty *I've* found is in *dropping them*. There's a man I met at Coblentz, nice man, to whom I'm a regular annuity. He's always what he calls "under a cloud;" first he loses his wife—that means ten pounds; then his father—that's another ten; then his sister-in-law, she's only a *fiver*; then his eldest son's drowned or something; that runs it up to fifteen—in fact, it's arriving at such a pitch that when he goes off himself I shall have to keep him altogether. That is to say, I——

MARY. (L., *rising*) Curious instance of unselfish generosity. How you must value those casual acquaintances, who desire *nothing* of you whatever. (*goes up*, L. H., LEVERET *up*, C. L.)

KATE. (*advancing, and aside to* LEVERET) That girl loves you.

LEV. (L. C.) What! Ridiculous!

KATE. (C.) *Very* ridiculous, but she *does*. You know we women must not be judged by the intellectual standard of you *men*.

LEV. (*aside*) There's no mistaking *her* affection for me anyhow. (*to* KATE) You don't regret your answer?

KATE. My word once given is——

LEV. Yes, but you've never loved anybody before? (KATE *turns aside*, R.) I shouldn't like anybody to call upon us with a prior claim—I think I should be put out—and I'm sure *he* would. You don't know how jealous I am of anything I'm devoted to.

KATE. (*turning and taking his hand*) Are you? Rely upon it you will never have cause to——

Enter abruptly CASSIDY *from* L. 3 E.

CAS. (L. C., *to* KATE) Sure there's a young man inquiring for *you*, miss.

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KATE. A what?

MARY. (*aside, seated,* L.) A young man!

LEV. (C., *dropping* KATE'S *hand*) Do you mean a gentleman?

CAS. Ivvery inch of him. An ould frind of yours, miss. With an illigant name. He says you won't forget Mr. Goolden Locket——

KATE. (R. C.) Gordon Lockhart! (*taking stage,* R.)

CAS. Sure, I thought it was Goolden Locket. (*goes up,* C.)

Enter GORDON LOCKHART, L. 3 E.

MARY. (*aside,* L.) There'll be a scene, I'm certain.

GORD. (*at back,* C.) Kate!

KATE. Gordon! (*rushing to shake hands with* GORDON *she brushes against* LEVERET, *as she passes to* C., *knocking him into chair,* R. C. *Pause*)

MARY (*crosses to* LEVERET, *with sham admiration*) Pretty picture, isn't it?

LEV. (*aside,* R.) Sort of picture I should like to hang up.

(KATE *and* GORDON *retire up stage,* C.)

MARY. What a handsome young man!

LEV. I don't see it at all.

MARY. Evidently hit hard with your *fiancée,* so of course he has no eyes for any one else, or I *really* should *myself* quite feel disposed to—but it's impossible to be smitten twice. (LEVERET *rises;* MARY *crosses to* L.)

LEV. (*clenching his hand and rising*) I'm not so sure of that. What can *she* see in him? Mary Moss is simply the greatest flirt that ever—(*looks at the others at back,* C.) They're having a row.

KATE. (R. C., *at back, to* GORDON) It's too late, altogether too late. You had no business to come here. All's over between us. Six months and not a line.

GORD. (L. C., *at back*) I wrote nearly every day.

KATE. Yes, to somebody else.

MARY. (*aside,* L.) This is delicious. (*turns to flower-stand,* L, *against wing*)

LEV. (R.) Excuse me—Miss McTavish—Kate—

GORD. (*aside, enraged*) Kate!

LEV. Isn't your friend well?

GORD. No. I'm very ill.

LEV. Sorry for that, because if you'd been sufficiently strong to have borne the operation, I was going to suggest that some one might introduce you.

KATE. (*advancing,* R. C.) Pardon me, this is Mr.—

GORD. (*advancing,* L. C.) This is Mr. Lockhart, an old friend of the McTavishes, who must apologise for his most abrupt—a—(*sees* MARY, L., *aside*) What a deuced pretty girl!

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KATE. (*aside, perceiving this*) How rude he's grown, but all these young Scotchmen are the same. Noodles!

LEV. (*aside to* KATE) Of course. *Donkeys.* The thistle you know, is the national emblem, and their most characteristic ballad is Banks and—*Brays.* I say, I thought you said you'd never—— (MARY *drops her glove, which* GORDON *hands to her*)

MARY. Thank you.

GORD. I think we met on the stairs at the hotel this morning, when I was so awkward as to tread on your dress, for which I was not allowed to apologise, as a large family with luggage intervened at the moment, and when they had passed you had vanished. Pray forgive my absurd awkwardness.

MARY. Oh, don't name it. (*they talk aside,* L. H.)

KATE. (*enraged, aside*) Men are all monsters and deceivers. I hate them *all.* (*crosses,* R.)

LEV. Except me. (*watching* MARY)

KATE. Oh, of course.

LEV. I'm *not* a man—I mean a deceiver.

Enter McTAVISH, L. 3 E., *comes down,* C.

McT. What a day! By Jove, puts a fellow in mind of India. When I was quartered at Slackerabad I— (*sees* GORDON) What's this. Mr.

McTAVISH

Seat

LEVERET — GORDON — *1st Wine*

KATE — MARY

Lockhart—a—a— (*to* LEVERET) Friend of yours?

LEV. (*crosses to him*) Never set eyes on him before.

McT. Not here, then, at your invitation, I presume.

LEV. Tell you I don't know him.

McT. I see. Then, as we are about to become more closely connected, I anticipate a privilege I'm sure you will accede me in the future—that of ordering unwelcome visitors off the premises. (*aside*) Nothing but a direct insult will crush this young cur's presumption. Mr. Lockhart, I speak the sentiments of the amiable master of this house, who is unwilling to act with abrupt discourtesy—which *I* am *not* —when I say as you are not invited here, have no right here, and are not wanted here——

LEV. No, I don't want him. (*watching* KATE)

McT. And in short, you will confer an obligation by taking yourself off.

LEV. Certainly, you know.

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McT. (*abruptly*) Do you wish him to stay?

Lev. (*aside to* Kate) Do *you* wish him to stay?

Kate. No—no. (Mary *goes up*, L. H.)

Gord. (*advancing*, C.) Oh, certainly. I merely called to give a few explanations and to *hear* some. Circumstances have prevented the accomplishment of the object of my visit. *You* are satisfied with matters as they stand; so am I. Good morning. (*raises his hat; goes up stage; shakes hands warmly with* Mary, *and exits*, L. 3 E.)

Kate. (R.) He's gone—he's gone, and I—but he never cared for me—I could have stood anything but *neglect*, and his evident admiration for that designing doll.

McT. (C., *to* Leveret) A worthless fellow, Lionel. Only wants to borrow money. (*goes up*, C.)

Mary. (*to* Leveret) I will also say good morning, for fear your ferocious new acquaintance should order *me* off the premises as well. However, I leave you in excellent hands. Good morning (*bows, and exits*, L. 3. E. Leveret *follows her to* L. 3 E.)

McT. (C.) A decidedly designing young woman.

Lev. (*turning sharply*) How the devil do you know that? (*turns again, looking off*, L.)

McT. Well—a—I—(*aside, down* C.) A symptom of mutiny here. I must crush it at once and for ever. Nothing like a bold *coup* with cowards. Kate, what's the matter with you? (*crossing to her*, R. C.)

Kate. (*reviving from a stupor with a start*) Nothing, nothing, father.

McT. I should think not. Go into the house—anywhere, and don't rejoin us till I desire it. You see how worthy your consideration this young upstart proves himself. What woman of spirit would endure such marked impertinence? You don't suppose *Leveret* would have behaved so. To make a parade even of his admiration for——

Kate. (*aside, to him*) Don't, father, don't. I saw all. I —I—I am only too happy that you have shewn me my own folly.

McT. (*kissing her forehead*) Bless you, my child, bless you. (Kate *exits into house.* McTavish *wipes his eyes, peering at* Leveret) Ah, Leveret. (*advancing*, C.) You don't know what it is to be the father of such a treasure.

Lev. I say, I'm sorry just now I spoke rather——

McT. (L. C.) Don't apologise.

Lev. I wasn't going to.

McT. Just so, Lionel. There must be no *arrière pensée* on either side—no concealment—no—in short, I want to speak to you about Cassidy.

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LEV. Cassidy!

McT. (*aside*) Hit or miss, here goes. (*to him*) Yes, Cassidy. Now Cassidy is a worthy fellow, an honest fellow.

LEV. I should like to hear anybody say he wasn't.

McT. Just so. Sentiment worthy of head and heart, and all that sort of thing. But I wish my daughter, when your wife, to be whole, sole and entire mistress of your establishment.

LEV. Of course.

McT. When she faces you at your table, there must be no black shadows behind your chair.

LEV. *Is* there one?

McT. Always.

LEV. Then she shall sit at the other end.

McT. That black shadow is your man Cassidy. He is a bachelor's servant—and a good one; *as* so he rules the household. When you are married, of course he goes.

LEV. Goes—goes where?

McT. It's not for me to suggest—but—say, a public-house.

LEV. Oh, he goes there *now*.

McT. What I mean is, he leaves your service. Old servants cannot conform to new regulations—especially old soldiers. It's my wish, nay, my *demand*, that he leaves your house.

LEV. But he wouldn't go.

McT. Look you here, Lionel Leveret; it is my daughter's first request, made by *me*, her father. If *you* refuse, *I* refuse. It seems a trifle, but I'm an obstinate man; and if your servant Cassidy remains, Miss McTavish declines to carry out the engagement. (*goes*, R. C.)

LEV. (*rises and follows*) I say, you know, McTavish, my dear fellow, she couldn't be so—really——

McT. (*aside*) He winces. It's done. (*to him*) But of course you will do as I—as *Kate* requests. (*strolls up and off, behind house*)

LEV. (*sitting*, R.) Get rid of Cassidy! I don't see that I'm justified in—at the same time, I don't see that he's of any particular *use*. But then he'd lay down his *life* for me. Yes, but then he was willing to risk that at a shilling a day, so that—he's rude to people, there's no doubt of that; then, again, he's rude to the sort of people one ought to be rude *to*. Still, Kate don't like him, and her wishes must be studied before everything. (*rises. Enter* CASSIDY, L. 3 E.; *comes down slowly*, L. C.) So I must put the best face I can upon the matter, and get rid of him as gently as I—(*starts on finding* CASSIDY *close by him*, L. C.) Why do you sneak about in this way—giving people such starts.

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CAS. "Snake," is it? Sure there's little of that reptile about *me*, your honour. Would you like me to go clattering about the primises like a *Dhragoon?*

LEV. Don't answer, Cassidy. Servants shouldn't.

CAS. Then, bedad, you've had some fine ones here, for there's not one of 'em answered at all, at all. That's why they've all been discharrged.

LEV. They should remember their station, and keep their place.

CAS. There's not one of 'em been good enough to keep their place when they'd got it. What's put you out, sir?

LEV. (*haughtily*) What do you mean?

CAS. Oh, nothin', nothin'.

LEV. Look here, Cassidy. I want to speak to you on a serious subject. I'm going to be married.

CAS. Sure and thin that *is* a sarious subject, anyhow.

LEV. It's a thing we must all come to.

CAS. Come too? Sure sometimes it more than meets us half way.

LEV. There's no particular reason why I should talk to you confidentially on the subject, but you're an old faithful servant, and, in short—well, my future wife disapproves of my retaining you—and, in fact. (*aside*) Somehow I feel scarlet all over.

CAS. What, sir? why Miss Moss and me's the best frinds in the *worrld*.

LEV. Very likely. Miss Moss is only too ready to form friendships with all sorts of undesirable people. Miss McTavish, however, objects to you—and so, of course, she as my future——

CAS. Miss McTavish! Sure, are you going to have *two* wives?

LEV. (*aside*) I'm afraid he's drunk. I've suspected him before. (*to him*) Miss McTavish is the lady of my choice.

CAS. Are you quite certain, sir, *you're* not the gintleman of *hers?*

LEV. (*aside*) McTavish is right. This fellow would become an infliction. I'll come to the point. (*to him*) Cassidy, I've the greatest respect for your character, but I think I can do without you in the future, and I shall be happy either to give you a pension, or set you up in some business, or if you prefer to go to Ireland and die amongst—I mean, to live amongst your relations—I say amongst your relations, why——

CAS. D'ye mane to say I'm discharrged!

LEV. No, not *discharged*, Cassidy, only I think if you, a... "got out" as soon as possible, it would be advisable.

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CAS. No, sir, I refuse to lave.
LEV. But I give you warning.
CAS. I shall not take it.
LEV. Cassidy, really I——
CAS. Do you consider a promise to a dyin' man as bindin'?
LEV. More than binding—sacred.
CAS. I gave a promise to your father, and I'll kape it.
LEV. What was that?
CAS. (*with feeling*) What was that, man alive? To guard *you*—to look afther you—to shield you from harrm—to keep near you and save you from cleverer blackguards who might ruin you. So I have; I've stuck by you like the merest dog; and sure he's a poor, thruthful dumb cratur that can't spake his moind, but he can shew his teeth whin his masther's in danger, and like that faithful animal, I can shew the few that's left me, when I see the approach of your innimy—and *your* innimy's the most to be afraid of, for sure it's *yourself*, sir.
LEV. Really, Cassidy, I——
CAS. (*moved*) What's new frinds to *ould* ones? I carried you on my back whin you was a little bit of a lad; I've seen you grow up tall, but not much cleverer than you was in thim ould times—and I'll nivver lave you till you turn me out with your own hand. I want no wages—I've my bit of pension—that'll kape me from starving, but (*taking his hand*) don't drive me from your door, Masther Lionel—don't, sir, don't; or you'll break my hearrt and vex the spirit of the kindest, noblest man that ever drew the breath of life.
LEV. (*overcome, aside*) I wouldn't part with him for a *thousand* McTavishes. (*to him*) Cassidy, old friend—what—what a strange fellow you are; you can't see when one's joking, and only putting to the test the affection of an old servant—an old companion. It was a sort of jest of mine—a very poor one too—ill-timed, and not in the best taste. I'm very, very sorry I ventured on it, Cassidy. I—I—beg your pardon. (*takes* CASSIDY'S *hand, voice broken*) I—I won't do so any more.
CAS. Sure, sir, it's not for the likes of *me* to shake hands with the likes of *you*. As you say, sir, it was a poor sort of joke to play off on an old servant, but p'raps you'll make a better one next time. (*they go up*, R., *and talk aside*)

Enter MAJOR FANG *and* MRS. MOSS, *arm in arm.*

FANG. I'll do it. As you say, the scoundrel knows your humble origin, and so on; and he thinks you'll never dare to expose him—but *I* have no such scruples, my dear friend. This young man shall *not* be sacrificed. In memory of the old days, Charlotte——

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Mrs. M. (c.) Don't, Alexander, don't refer to them

Fang. Before Moss cut me out, I shall bring this affair to a head, and if two old soldiers like you and I can't lay such a vagabond as this by the heels, why, ma'am, we'd better retire from the field as soon as possible. (Mrs. Moss *sits*, L.)

Cas. (R. C.) I thought it strange your honour'd think more of Captain McTavish's opinion than *my* feelings. If you'd sent me away at his command——

Fang. (L.) What's that!

Cas. Nothin', Major; only masther's goin' to marry Miss McTavish, and pretinded he was goin' to discharrge me because her father disliked me—but it was only pretence.

(*goes, exit*, L. 3 E.)

Fang. (*crossing to* Leveret, R.) Mr. Leveret, my name is Fang—Major Fang, of your father's old regiment, once his bosom friend. (*shakes hands*) This news astonishes me—horrifies me.

Lev. (R.) But I'm not going to send him away at all.

Fang. Send him away, man, at the dictation of such a scoundrel as McTavish, as he calls himself!

Lev. Halloa! Halloa! Do you know him?

Fang. Too well. *You* evidently don't. Poor fellow, you are weak—easily led—even swindled; *you*, the son of Colonel Leveret, the "Old Lion," as we called him. A man of unstained honour, a gentleman in thought and deed—take as your wife the daughter of Richard Kendrick. (Kate *enters room, and hearing the name stands in open window listening*) A man no decent person would be seen speaking to—a fellow who having exhausted the good nature of his friends, has earned his livelihood for years by every vile and shameful trick his cunning nature could devise?

Lev. What do you say? Surely you're mistaken in——

Fang. Ask him in my presence—(*music till Act*)—why he was cashiered—*kicked*—cut, and might have been killed if he'd had ordinary courage—but the fellow's character is notorious. Didn't he ruin young Litchfield, of the Ninth? Drove him to suicide, they say. Didn't he call out poor Grainger, at Gibraltar, and then accept an apology, and a cheque to square the affront? Wasn't he discovered cheating at cards at Brand's, at the Albany, and he paid a friend of mine a debt of honour with a cheque on a bank at which he had never had an account—you marry this man's daughter! Why, you must be *mad*, and I for one won't see you do it without a protest.

Lev. (*after a pause*) But do you think his daughte Kate knows—knows——

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FANG. She couldn't, or she would never have—*never* have——

A low wail is heard; all turn, discovering KATE *leaning against house,* R., *having overheard all.*

MRS. M. (*aside to* FANG) She's heard all.

FANG. Yes; and upon my soul, poor girl, I believe for the first time. *Her* nature and her father's are widely different.

(LEVERET *stands motionless—grieved.* MARY MOSS *re-enters at back,* L.H.; *comes to* MRS. MOSS *at back of chair. They converse aside.* MRS. MOSS *is seated.*

FANG. (*advancing a little*) Of course, what I said was intended for your private ear, Lionel.

KATE. (R., *slightly advancing*) And so, sir, you mentioned it in *public;* every one must appreciate your delicacy—and consideration. (*to* LEVERET) Lionel, Mr. Leveret,—you say nothing—you do not spurn the daughter of this unfortunate person—this—according to that gentleman's description—this degraded person—I— (*enter* MCTAVISH *back of house,* R.; *stops up stage*) I spare you the unpleasant task; consider everything over between us; you shall *not* marry the daughter of—— (*buries her face in her hands*)

LEV. (*quietly*) You'll excuse me, Kate—I am not marrying your father. In this world of ours, we can't marry our grandmothers, much less our fathers-in-law. I have given my word to *you;* your parental disadvantages are your misfortune, *not* your fault. I have watched your nature closely, and I have seen that you are a true, kind-hearted, generous, amiable girl, a lady in heart and mind; in the midst of terrible surroundings—and believe me, Kate, I feel only too well contented when you do me the honour to accept my hand.

MCT. (*at back, coming down* R. *corner*) A gentleman! Hang it all, he's a nobleman.

LEV. Oh, no, sir. A nobleman can only be a gentleman—just as the grey-headed warrior, who wears the signs and tokens of his noble deeds upon his breast, rewarded, honoured, titled, *worshipped,* even—is—is only an

OLD SOLDIER AFTER ALL.

(KATE *hangs her head in shame.* MCTAVISH *offers his hand to* LEVERET, *who lets him see he won't take it.* MARY *at back of seat,* L., *distressed. Melody swells out as*

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ACT DESCENDS SLOWLY.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Drawing room at* LEVERET'S. *Window, practical,* C., *doors,* R. *and* L. 3 E., *window,* R. 2 E., *small table,* R. C., *and two chairs about stage; couch,* L. H. MRS. MOSS *discovered seated,* R. H. MARY *at window,* C.

MRS. M. Now, Mary, haven't you anything to talk about? You've been a perfect infliction to a sensitive parent, my dear, these three weeks. Have you a "silent sorrow here" —or there, or wherever silent sorrows are in the habit of locating themselves?

MARY. I have a sorrow certainly.

MRS. M. And a *silent* one, my love; for there's no getting a word from you—whenever anything puts *me* out I let people know it. I never let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on my damson cheese, as Milton says.

MARY. "Damask cheek," mamma, and it isn't Milton.

MRS. M. Rubbish! I've met with cheek of every variety in my time, and it never was damask, and what's Milton?

MARY. One of our greatest native——

MRS. M. Oh, the Milton *natives* were always celebrated.

MARY. (L.) Ah! *you* never met with a bitter trial in early life.

MRS. M. (R.) *Didn't* I? It's all past and gone now, so there's no harm in mentioning it, but when I was *your* age I was much fonder of Alexander Fang than your poor dear pa.

MARY. Major Fang!

MRS. M. He's a confirmed old bachelor, and your poor pa's no more. But memory—memory, what is it memory does? Mary, good gracious *me*, you so fond of poetry and not able to tell me what "memory" does.

MARY. Well, in *your* case I should say it *forgets*.

MRS. M. "Makes the heart grow fonder," that's it.

MARY. No, that's absence.

MRS. M. Well, it don't matter. But poor Major Fang—he was a lieutenant then, and waltzed like a cherub.

MARY. *Did* he? That must have had a rather odd effect.

MRS. M. And sang duets——

MARY. By himself?

MRS. M. Don't be absurd; no, with *me*. But his *name*. Ah! they say—who is it?—isn't it Chaucer, or Sir Benjamin Johnson, or Shakespeare, or some of those old gentlemen one sees in Westminster Abbey?—what—"what's in a name?" I say everything. Poor *Fang* was a constant butt. When he danced, that impudent young Dobson called it a *Fang*-dango—most unwarrantable. They said his notions were all old-fangled—shameful! and my late husband, when I've

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going down to supper on the poor young man's arm, and I said I was hungry—said, "of course," "vous avez faim." From that day to *this*, my dear, I never could make out what he meant.

Enter CASSIDY, *door*, R. H.

MARY. Why, mamma, it's French.

MRS. M. *Is* it? Then I'm proud to say I despise the language, the cookery and——

CAS. Thrue for you, ma'am—cookery in particular. Sure, master tried a French cook, and she nearly pisoned the entire establishment with her "ragoos" and her "hommerlits," and her outlandish kickshawses; as I said to masther, what can you expect from a poor ignorant cratur as calls a leg of mutton a "jigger," and insulted the beef-steaks by calling 'em *fillics*—though I suppose that came from their always feeding on horses-flesh over there.

MRS. M. We came to bid your master good-bye, Cassidy. But, as usual, he's out.

CAS. Then ye *are* going, ma'am, and you, miss?

MARY. Yes, Cassidy. For ever.

CAS. (C.) And sure that's a mortial long time.

MARY. (L.) I don't suppose your master will miss us much. Of course he seems wonderfully happy, Cassidy, at his approaching marriage.

CAS. I daresay he's overflowing with delight inwardly, but he manages to concale it, miss.

MARY. Does he? Ha! Not apparently carried away at the prospect, eh?

CAS. Betwene ourselves, miss, if it wasn't for having given his word, I believe he'd be glad to be off the bargain.

MARY. (*anxiously*) No—no. Cassidy, do you really *believe* that?

CAS. Sure, miss, I don't forget thim ould times in Naples.

MARY. Don't, Cassidy.

CAS. (*aside*) Bedad, they're not married yet, and there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, and if I could put a spoke in McTavish's wheel, I'd——

MARY. You were speaking of Naples, Cassidy.

CAS. The dirty vagabones thim Napolitans are! The unwashed lazy thaves! Whin I was oncest at Yarmouth, they tould me all the bloathers was sint away, and, bedad, I bolave the Naples *soap's* trated the same. What times thim was. Do you remimber the long walks and the long drives?

MARY. (*sighing*) Ah, yes, I do indeed.

CAS. And my going up Mount Vesuvius to see the crater, under the belafe it was whiskey, miss, and then telling me they'd introduce me to my ould countryman MacArooney?

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MRS. M. Ha! ha! ha! I suppose they saw you were a poor simple fellow.

CAS. Thank you for nothing, ma'am, I suppose; they *did*.

Enter MAJOR FANG, *door*, R. H.

MRS. M. (R. C.) And after all you can't help—Ha, Major.

FANG. (R.) Our young friend Gordon's delighted at the prospect of the appointment. Really, Radcliffe's behaved like a Trojan in his cause. And I——

MRS. M. *You*—Alexander, *you* were always a generous friend. Bless you, Alexander, bless you. (*gives him her hand*)

FANG. Far too generous w'en I gave you up to my lamented rival.

MRS. M. (*coquettishly*) Don't, it's so long ago—and yet not so *very* long.

FANG. Hang it, no. I feel as young as ever.

MRS. M. So do I—*younger*.

FANG. Let's take a stroll round the grounds.

MRS. M. Certainly. I *must* wait to see Mr. Leveret. (*takes his arm. They go off*, L. D).

CAS. (*laughing; aside to* MARY.) Sure, there'll be a *thirrd* marriage before the year's out.

MARY. A *third*—and the *others*——

CAS. Masther and Miss McTavish—and—(*winks*) I've watched Mr. Goolden Locket and——

MARY. Cassidy, you're mistaken, I— Listen to me. (*rises*) We are going abroad, a great way off. I don't suppose I shall ever see you again. I certainly sh ll never see your *master* again, and— (*breaks down*) I can't help appearing a little cut up, Cassidy, you see, leaving a place where one has—has——

CAS. Lived about two weeks and a half, miss. Sure it's harrowing to the feelings, of course.

MARY. Cassidy, you'll never leave your master, will you?

CAS. Lave him! Sure now he's going to have a wife to take care of him he'll want me to look after him more than ivver.

MARY. And if he should ever happen to be *ill*——

CAS. I'll let you know in a *moment*, miss.

MARY. No; I didn't mean *that*. But you'll stay by him. I wish you to possess something to remember me by, Cassidy, so if you'll accept—— (*taking bank-note from her purse, and offering it*)

CAS. No, no, miss. I don't want anything—I can rimimber you without being paid for it. I don't care to—well, if you insist—(*takes note*) A five-pound note! Sure I don't desarve——

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MARY. (*with a burst*) Never—never leave him!

CAS. (*alluding to the note*) Sure I'll stick to it everlasting. (*pockets note and goes up*)

Enter GORDON LOCKHART, R. D.

GORD. (R. C.) Really, Mary, I can't see what object you have in staying here so long.

MARY. (L. C.) My object was to say farewell to an old friend, and I really can't understand why you should object. (*aside*) His manner is unpleasantly brusque, to say the least of it. (*goes up*, L.)

GORD. (*aside*) I'm afraid there's a touch of the mother's temper here.

MARY. (*up*, L.) What do *you* come for? To look after *me*?

GORD. Not entirely. *I* also want to shake Leveret by the hand before going away—and—a—wish him happiness.

MARY. Very well. *I* shall be with mamma. I suppose you'll join us. (*Exit door*, L.)

GORD. (*aside*) What's the matter with her? Charming as she undoubtedly is she's—she's remarkably variable. Never seems to know her own mind. Cassidy.

CAS. (*up*, L.) Yes, sir. (*comes down*, R. H.)

GORD. You know I'm going abroad. I've got an appointment and——

CAS. And you'll kape it, if you're wise.

GORD. Don't. I'm serious now—deuced serious. We shall in all probability never meet again. In a foreign land possibly I may bury my—bury my——

CAS. Your mother-in-law?

GORD. No, sir. All recollection of—of—never mind. I'm going *abroad*, and so as I've never yet given you anything, Cassidy, I wish to make you a small present.

CAS. Oh, sir, I couldn't think of——

GORD. Cassidy, your master is going to be married. It is in your power to assist your new mistress in many ways. You can cheer her with your droll stories, and—and, and in fact, make her miserable life happy. You're a tender-hearted, honest fellow—watch over her, poor girl! and—if she should ever be in any serious danger——

CAS. Sure, I'll telegraph you if you're at the Antipoddies.

GORD. What do you mean?

CAS. (*winks at him*) They're not married yet, sir. I wouldn't lave England for a day or two.

GORD. Pah! Why remain another hour? Here, Cassidy, this ring isn't of any particular value, but, such as it is, I should be glad if you'd accept it. (*gives him a ring off his finger*) Whenever you look at it—as you *must* do pretty

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often—remember my last request—guard and watch over your master's wife as tenderly and as truly as you have guarded and watched over *him*. Good-bye. (*shakes hands, and exits door*, L.)

CAS. Sure, I've got a purty task before me, and a nice lively time I'll have of it, with a masther and misthress that passes their lives in trying to chate themselves into the idea that they love one another. If I hadn't given the ould Colonel that promise, it's the public-house I'd accept this minute and be continted.

MCTAVISH *heard singing*, R. H.

Oh, vive l'amour, cigars and cognac;
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! with these we'll bivouac.

CAS. Divil doubt you.

Enter MCTAVISH, *a little elevated, from* R. U. E.

MCT. (*coming down*, L.) Ha! Cassidy, you there, eh? Sort of privileged servant *you* are, are you not? Quite right—your master believes in you, and allows you to do pretty much as you please. Ha! ha! Only some people might think it strange. (*sits on couch*, L., *places his feet on it*)

CAS. You're right, sir, master *does* let people do as they like, and p'raps it would have been better for him if he hadn't. (*aside*) I'll thry an experiment on him. It can only fail anyhow.

MCT. (*aside*) It's as well to conciliate the fellow, as he's evidently bound to be a fixture. (*to him*) Time's getting on, Cassidy, your master'll soon be a married man.

CAS. Yes, sir, that's what's grievin' me. He can't afford it.

MCT. Eh? Ha! ha! Can't he? Is he so *very* much pressed for money, eh? Ha! ha! I daresay he'll be able to pull through.

CAS. Oh, thin, you've heard thin, have you?

MCT. Heard! heard what?

CAS. Of masther's worries and throubles, and Sir Barnet Dyke's abominable behaviour, letting masther in for thousands, the vagabone!

MCT. What do you mean?

CAS. And thin misfortunes never come alone. All the ould college debts crowding in, and worst of all, masther's cousin Algernon disputin' his right to the Grassdale property which——

MCT. What! (*starts up*)

CAS. Not that I think he'll get it, but he's a determined fellow, and a Chancery suit won't benefit the estate, anyhow, for master swears he'll fight it out if it costs him every shilling he's got.

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McT. (*excitedly*) But he *mustn't* fight it out. A Chancery suit! why, it might absorb every penny; this cousin must be offered something.

Cas. That's what I says. Square him, I says—give him a lump sum and he'll take it, but thin says masther, "At this moment I *haven't* a lump sum, and if matters don't mend I never *may* have;" then, says I, "Borry it of Mr Goolden Locket," I says, "and give him the security of——"

McT. Cassidy, are you in liquor?

Cas. No, sir, though I've had enough throuble about these misfortunes of masther to drive me to it.

McT. Mr. Lockhart hasn't a shilling to bless himself with.

Cas. Sure, he's many a pound to bless other people with. D'ye think old Mother Moss would give her consint to his paying his attentions to her daughter if he wasn't well off? He's come into a hape of property.

McT. Do you mean it? (*aside*) He was always vapouring about some Scotch estate or other that he ought to have——

Cas. Three thousand a year, sir, that's the sum.

McT. Three thousand a—and is his marriage *fixed*—settled?

Cas. I don't know, sir; but, anyhow, there's no rale love—the ould attachment's stronger than ivver, for——

McT. (*excitedly*) I must see to this at once. As you say, Cassidy, my good fellow, there *can* be no love in the case. It's a matter of pique. (*aside*) I've been too severe with Kate—too unfeeling—a—Cassidy, I've never given you anything; here's a little remembrancer—drink my health. I respect you, my worthy fellow, you're an honest and, above all, a *truthful* person. (*shakes hands and goes to* L. H.; *aside*) *Now* for a few words with that downiest of Old Soldiers, Mrs. Major Moss. (*Exit door*, L. H.)

Cas. Bedad, ivverybody's givin' me prisents and shaking hands with me this day. "Truthful" is it, Captain McTavish? Faith, prevention's better than cure, and *invention's* better than aither. (*goes up*, R. D.)

Lev. (*outside*, L.) My dear, I couldn't help it, it wasn't my fault.

Kate. (*outside*) Oh, you're so awkward, it's dreadful.

Kate *enters*, L. *door, wearing a long dress.* Leveret *follows.*

Lev. Upon my honour, Kate, I couldn't help it—if you will wear such long dresses.

Kate. You wouldn't have me go about like a school-girl, or a dairymaid? you are so dreadfully awkward, treading on one's skirt so stupidly.

Lev. Well, my dear, I don't see why you should travel about like royalty, and wherever you go always have a special train.

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KATE. (*crosses to* L.) Oh, of *course*, Miss Moss always wears *short* dresses.

LEV. And devilish well she looks in 'em too.

KATE. Oh, pray moderate your language.

LEV I beg your pardon, Kate—I—I *will* in future.

KATE. (*shaking hands*) I beg *yours*, Lionel. I know I'm quick tempered.

LEV. (*aside*, L.) She's a good creature, and I *wish* I could adore her.

KATE. (*aside*, R.) He's a thorough gentleman, but I *can't* love him properly. (*they sit at table*, R.)

LEV. I say—let's talk about our wedding; it's getting precious near.

KATE. Oh, no; let's talk of something pleasant.

LEV. Well, of Lockhart's and Mary's.

KATE. Good gracious *me! That* isn't pleasant.

LEV. Yes, it *is*—to them.

KATE. Not to other people though.

LEV. No, by Jove, it's rather maddening.

KATE. What do you mean by "maddening?"

LEV. What do you mean by "not to other people though?"

KATE. I mean to say—a—a—that is——

LEV. So do *I*. My sentiments precisely.

KATE. But what *are* your sentiments?

LEV. Same as yours.

KATE. It's absurd their marrying; they're not suited to each other at all.

LEV. I think it's disgusting.

KATE. I'm sure Gordon doesn't really care for her.

LEV. I'm certain Mary despises *him* in her inmost heart.

KATE. Then, why don't you *say* so?

LEV. I *do* say so.

KATE. You don't say it out.

LEV. (*shouting*) I'm certain Mary despises him in her——

KATE. Oh, hush! Don't make that noise, you never heard Gordon shout like that.

LEV. And you've always seen Mary Moss keep her temper.

KATE. So do *I* keep my temper.

LEV. Yes, you do; if you lost it, it would be all the better.

KATE. You seem to think much more of *her*, than you do of *me*.

LEV. Well, Gordon Lockhart's always on *your* lips.

KATE. No, he isn't—at least, never *now*. The fact is you're sorry you've given your word, since Major Fang made those shameful accusations against my father—which, by the way, it was not very manly in him not to substantiate.

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LEV. Scarcely more manly of your father not to *make* him. (*rises, and crosses,* L. H.)

Enter MCTAVISH *through window,* L. C.

MCT. Oh, he's *here*. It's all true. Lockhart *has* come into something. I'll soon come to some explanation with Mr. Leveret. I'll call him out and shoot him, if he's deceived a simple-minded "old soldier." I've plenty of excuses for quarrelling with him; and, if it's worth my while, damme! I'll resent a lot of things. (*comes down*) Leveret, a word. (*takes him aside,* L.) Between you and me—that is, between man and man——

LEV. I don't see *that*, but go on——

MCT. At a time like the present—I say, the present.

LEV. (*aside*) I see—another fifty pounds. He may well say the *present*, for I shall never get it back again. (*to him*) Yes?

MCT. Secrets won't do for *me*. I grieve to say I've heard certain reports——

LEV. By Jove! He's heard of it—observed it—*seen* that *Mary* is the *real* object of my affection, and *not* Kate. I can't help it—I—— (*turns away*)

MCT. You turn aside. You cannot meet the glance of the fond and trusting parent. Oh, Lionel, how could you so deceive me? I believed in you thoroughly. I so completely smothered my sense of honour and dignity to reveal my unfortunate pecuniary position, *and*—feeling you to be a gentleman and a man of honour—went so far as to pocket my pride, and borrow certain sums which——

LEV. Which you also pocketed.

MCT. Debts of honour, sir—debts of honour. You have no acknowledgment, as you are aware. But you know my word's as good as my bond.

LEV. I should say better.

MCT. In one word, is what I hear *true?*

LEV. Yes, it *is*—there.

MCT. And you're a *sham*—a pretender. Mr. Leveret, you have trifled with a confiding girl's affections—outraged a father's feelings; consider your engagement with Kate at an end. I wish it—she wishes it.

LEV. (*seizing his hand*) Upon my word, I'm very much obliged to you. You're not in fun?

MCT. In fun, sir! Let me tell you that there *are* men who would resent this—who would call you a swindler, and an impostor, who would call you out, and simply——

LEV. (*quietly,* L.) Mr. McTavish—or whatever your name is—let me assure you that I am in robust health, rather out

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of temper, and that I wear exceptionally strong boots. The last straw, they say, breaks the camel's back, and should you pile up many more, I m afraid you may find yourself in the undesirable position of the camel—you understand. Having pointed a *moral*, don't let me have to adorn—a— (*with slight suggestion of kick*)

McT. (*quickly*) Certainly *not*, sir. (*stepping back*)

Lev. Thank you. (*goes up*, L.)

Kate. (*down*, R.) Father.

McT. (*aside*, R.C.) I feel as if I'd been kicked, morally and physically. Morally it don't matter—physically it hurts. And *I'm* hurt—a—Kate, it's no use—you can't marry him.

Kate. What do you mean?

McT. He hasn't any money. It's all a mistake. Involved—hopelessly. I ought to have looked into matters fully long ago. I've the best authority for what I state. Kate, I have been most unjust towards poor Gordon.

Kate. Poor Gordon!

McT. I mean *rich* Gordon. He's a wealthy man. Haven't you heard of it? No!—come into a large fortune, whilst this fellow Leveret's a swindle. You know you never loved him.

Kate. (*recoiling*) What!

McT. You know you never did.

Kate. But consider; *he* loves *me*. Why, in the very face of these cruel assertions against *you* he gallantly refused to credit them, or if he half suspected they were true he still stood by his bargain like a gentleman, and now that you tell me he is poor and Gordon Lockhart rich, you may make sure, father, I shall stand by *mine*. (*crosses, to* L.)

McT. But, you obstinate girl, don't you see how abominably he has deceived us—taken us in?

Kate. Oh, father, can *we* accuse anyone of deceit without a blush?

McT. Blush! never blushed in my life.

Lev. (*re-entering; aside*) He's trying to make her give me up. He'll never do it: she's so fearfully fond of me.

Kate. Lionel, does—does my father speak the truth?

Lev. (L.) Sometimes. By accident.

Kate. (C.) And this report is genuine.

Lev. I can't deny it.

Kate. I respect you for being outspoken. It shall make no difference in our relations, Lionel, and I will never reproach you.

Lev. (*aside*) Wonderful creatures, women—when they really do adore a fellow.

McT. (*enraged*) Oh, if you persist in your blind folly you shall none of you ever see me again.

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LEV. (*to* KATE, *aside*) "Persist in your blind folly."

McT. Expect nothing from *me*——I—I'll cut you off with a shilling.

LEV. Which you'll borrow.

McT. Mr. Leveret—I—I'm not so young as I was *once*. (*crosses to* LEVERET)

LEV. I never know a man who *was*.

McT. But, sir, there is some one else who may not submit so tamely to your insolence. It is not too late, Kate, my love, to make amends for my previous harshness. It was for your good. Dear Gordon, bless him, I always loved him like my own son! (*Exit quickly*, R. H.)

KATE. It's terrible to be surrounded with so much deception, and—— (*goes*, R., *then up*. LEVERET *follows her*)

Enter MARY, *followed by* GORDON, *door*, L.

MARY. (C.) Oh, I'm quite tired of your continual——

GORD. (L.) I say it for your good. You must *not* be so changeable, you must settle with your mother, Mary, one way or the other.

MARY. Mamma objects; she had other views, and——

GORD. But you tell me *you* care for me, and——

MARY. I'm sure I never did. (*sees* LEVERET *and* KATE *together, up*, R.) But I do *now*, Gordon: (*aside*) Poor dear Lionel—what a life she'll lead him. A designing, wicked girl.

KATE. (*aside*) That odious Mary Moss. (*comes down*) Never leaves him. (*the girls turn simultaneously and approach each other affectionately*)

MARY. Dear Kate, how charming you look to-day.

KATE. Mary, my love, what a duck of a bonnet. (*they go off by window*, L. C., *their arms round each other's waists*)

LEV. (R.) Don't you think it's abominable of women to pretend they're fond of people when they're not?

GORD. (L.) Atrocious. But it's worse in men.

LEV. Oh, that's disgraceful. For instance, how villainous it would be of *you* to lead Mary Moss to think you were devoted, when all the time you were fond of somebody else.

GORD. Ah, or if you were *not* as attached to Miss McTavish as you pretend to be.

LEV. Pretend! absurd. I say, by the way, as you *are* evidently Mary's future husband, take my advice, and don't cross her temper—she's amiability *now*, but you'll find her out.

GORD. Oddly enough, I was about to make the very same remark regarding Kate.

LEV. Miss McTavish next time.

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Re-enter KATE *and* MARY ; *they remain at back.*

GORD. Miss Moss and not Mary, for the future.

LEV. Perhaps I have a prior right to call her Mary.

GORD. Would you be surprised to hear that I have a long standing claim to call your *fiancée* Kate ?

LEV. Then my suspicions are——

GORD. Nothing to *mine*. Let's settle this. You were fond of Mary once.

LEV. Awfully.

GORD. But time——

LEV. Increased the passion.

GORD. Then, you love her still.

LEV. And always shall.

GORD. But she's going to be my wife.

LEV. That's *your* look out.

GORD. And Kate knows of it ?

LEV. *Must* do *some* day—you may lock up your feelings as you do the spirits ; but Time's a charwoman and 'll get at them *some*how.

GORD. But she doesn't love you—she only marries you from a romantic determination to keep her word, now that you are so hopelessly involved——

LEV. Hopelessly *what ?*

GORD. Poor—almost ruined !

LEV. None of your jokes. Why, I never owed a shilling in my life.

GORD. But your college debts ?

LEV. Never went to college.

GORD. And your litigious cousin ?

LEV. Haven't got a cousin.

KATE. (*aside*, R.) What's this ?—can I have——

GORD. Why, I heard you were irretrievably——

LEV. And I heard *you* have tumbled into a large legacy. That's why Mary really accepts you.

MARY. (*aside*, L.) Can he think me so *mean !*

GORD. A legacy ! Nonsense ! Certainly I *have* a chance of a berth abroad, of nearly three hundred a year, but——

KATE. (*down*, R.) Deceivers both !

MARY. (*down*, L.) Someone's been telling dreadful stories.

GORD. I'm glad to hear the report was false. So you're as rich as was always supposed. My dear fellow, I congratulate you. (*shakes hands heartily*)

LEV. And you've only got the prospect of a starvation income instead of thousands. My dear fellow, I congratulate you. (*shakes hands cordially*) I can only say— (*turns, and sees* KATE) Kate

KATE. So you pretended poverty to try me, eh ? You are

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as rich as ever. And I dissolve our engagement. Mary, Gordon Lockhart never can have cared for you; *his* trick was even more heartless.

GORD. I am innocent of any trick. But I see, Miss Moss, how shallow was your affection. (*crosses to* KATE, R., LEVERET *crosses in front of* GORDON *to* MARY, L.)

LEV. Give it him back, Mary. Tell him you never loved him.

MARY. (*half crying*) No more I ever did; but *you* behaved so—so——

GORD. Then your pretended liking for me was the result of *pique*. Heartless girl, I— (*turns to* KATE, R.) Could you—could you ever forgive me?

KATE. (*half crying*) Yes, I'm *sure* I could.

GORD. Say it again! Say it again! (*they embrace*)

LEV. He's embracing my future wife. My future wife don't appear to mind it much. Really, I——

MARY. (*maliciously*) Of course not. *You* are no doubt overwhelmed with rage and jealousy.

LEV. On the contrary, I'm deuced glad of it.

MARY. (*melting*) Why don't you *shew* you are, then?

(LEVERET *turns abruptly and embraces* MARY)

GORD. I say, do you know what you are doing?

LEV. Yes, I *do*, and I like it.

GORD. But you know this is all wrong.

LEV. I know that—that's what makes it so jolly. (*puts* KATE *on sofa*, L., *sits by her*)

Enter MCTAVISH, R. D.; MRS. MOSS, L. D.; *mutual delight at the new change of affairs.*

McT. (R. C.) What's this I see? Can it be possible? Ha! ha! This is something *like*—you see, my dear madam, our children have come to their senses. (*aside*) Clever Kate to have given this impostor Leveret his congé.

MRS. M. (L. C.) Mary has at last remembered what is due to her mother and the memory of Demetrius, and secured dear, charming, wealthy Lionel after all.

McT. (R. C., *to* KATE) No explanations, I see it all. Bless you, Gordon! Bless you! (*shakes hands*)

MRS. M. (L. C., *to couple*, L.) Mary, Lionel—this—this, indeed, reminds me of Naples. Excuse me if I shed a maternal tear. (*goes up*, L.)

LEV. Oh, as many as you like; it's an old carpet.

MARY. (*to* LEVERET) So you pretended actually you were poor.

LEV. *I* pretended I was poor. Why on earth should I?

McT. (*aside, on*) Eh?

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KATE. (*seated*, R., *to* GORDON) To assert you had come into thousands a year.

GORD. I never *did*. I have a chance of nearly three hundred a year abroad, if Fang succeeds; but I'm by no means sanguine. Beyond that, I haven't a sixpence.

McT. (*aside*) Three hundred! A washerwoman's account! Can I have been duped? Oh, horrible!

MRS. M. (*to* McTAVISH) Captain McTavish, I admire your unselfish conduct. I have been mistaken in you. Accept a widow's grateful—— (*takes his hand, he flings it aside*)

McT. What does it mean, madam? Have you——

MRS. M. Beaten you at a game of "Old Soldiers." Decidedly. You had better accept your defeat pleasantly. (CASSIDY *brings on wine from door*, R.)

FANG *enters door*, L. H.

McT. You've never done it alone. You've accomplices. But I'll find 'em out. I'll expose them, I'll—(*turns and sees* CASSIDY, R.; MRS. MOSS *goes up to* FANG) Cassidy, Cassidy.

CAS. (R., *saluting him*) Your honour.

McT. I believe *you're* at the bottom of this masquerading.

CAS. Sure, Captain, you wouldn't go to take my char*ack*ther from me. If I lose my char*ack*ther—I—

McT. You told me——

CAS. Sure, I tould you what I was tould myself—the vagabones to go and deceive a simple ould fellow like me.

FANG. (L., *bringing* McTAVISH *down*) McTavish, don't spoil the happiness of the two young couples—of the *third* couple—Mrs. Moss and myself—an old flame of mine.

CAS. Sure, thim ould flames burns fiercer than the young sparks, anyhow.

FANG. We've ample means, and I intend Kate and Lockhart to live with us. Now, I can nominate *you* to this agency in the West Indies, if you like to go.

McT. All this is so horribly sudden. What, and leave this dear girl— (*Music till curtain*) I—the West Indies!

FANG. They like *billiards* out there. They don't object to *cards*. They've a weakness for wagers; as a rule you're lucky.

McT. But how about the liver?

FANG. Finest place in the world for the liver. (*aside*) The *free* liver. Think over it. (*turns away, to* MRS. MOSS, *up*, L. C. McTAVISH *takes snuff, then goes up*, R. C.)

MRS. M. Oh, how times change, eh?

FANG. "Tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis."

CAS. The ould villain's saying something impudent in a

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foreign language. I knew what'd come of it, whin I saw them making love among the spiders in the summer-house.

KATE. I believe it's all a dream.

LEV. (*to* MARY) A dream—would you like to wake and find it so?

MARY. No, Lionel, would you?

LEV. If I did I'd go to sleep again. You see if we'd all been a little outspoken—more straightforward—and a little better tempered——

MARY. A litt'e less deceitful.

KATE. A little less designing.

CAS. A little more thruthful, and not so exceedingly weak-minded.

MRS. M. We shouldn't have——

FANG. Shouldn't have succeeded.

LEV. If we *have* succeeded in securing, as let us humbly hope we *have* secured a prosperous campaign for—for our

OUR SOLDIERS.

Curtain

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OLD SAILORS;

ORIGINAL COMEDY, IN THREE ACTS,

BY

HENRY J. BYRON,

AUTHOR OF

Old Soldiers; Old Sailors; War to the Knife; Cyril's Success; The Old Story; Dundreary Married and Done For; Cinderella; Blue Beard from a New Point of View; Robinson Crusoe; Little Don Giovanni; Mazeppa; The Maid and the Magpie, or the Fatal Spoon; The Babes in the Wood; Bride of Abydos; Fra Diavolo; Jack the Giant Killer; Very Latest Edition of the Lady of Lyons; The Nymph of the Lurleyberg; Pilgrim of Love; The Garibaldi Excursionists; Aladdin, or the Wonderful Scamp; Esmeralda, or the Sensation Goat; Goldenhair the Good; Ivanhoe in Accordance, etc.; Beauty and the Beast; Rival Othellos; Whittington and His Cat; Puss in a New Pair of Boots; Miss Eily O'Connor; George de Barnwell; Our Sea-side Lodgings; The Rose-bud of Stinging-nettle Farm; The Sensation Fork; My Wife and I; Beautiful Haidee, or the Sea Nymph and the Sallee Rovers; Ill Treated Il Trovatore; The Motto: "I am all there!" St. George and the Dragon; Lady Belle Belle; Orpheus and Eurydice, or the Young Gentleman who Charmed the Rocks; 1863, or the Sensations of the Past Year; Mazourka, or the Stick, the Pole, and the Tartar; The "Grin" Bushes; Lion and the Unicorn; Sensation Dramas, for the Back Drawing Room; Princess Springtime, or the Envoy that Stole the King's Daughter; La Sonnambula! or the Supper, the Sleeper, and the Merry Swiss Boy; Pan; Lucia di Lammermoor; Pandora's Box; A Hundred Thousand Pounds; William Tell with a Vengeance, or the Pet, the Patriot, and the Pippin; Lucretia Borgia, M.D.; The Lancashire Lass; Enchanted Wood; Not such a Fool as he Looks; Lord Bateman, or the Proud Young Porter and the Fair Sophia; The Corsican Bothers, or the Troublesome Twins; Eurydice, or Little Orpheus and his Lute; English Gentleman; Daisy Farm; Trompter's Box; Orange Tree and the Humble Bee; Robert Macaire; Camaralzaman; Partners for Life; Tottles; Dearer than Life; Good News; Wait and Hope; Uncle Dick's Darling; Sour Grapes; Haunted Houses; Fine Feathers; Lady of the Lane; Old Chums: Bohemian Gyurl; Little Don Cæsar de Bazan; The Bull by the Horns; Blow for Blow; Oil and Vinegar; An American Lady; Our Boys; Little Doctor Faust; Guinea Gold; A Fool and His Money; La Sonnambula; Pretty Esmeralda; Pampered Menials; Young Fra Diavolo; Uncle; The Girls; Weak Woman; Married in Haste, &c., &c.

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Produced at the Strand Theatre, October 19th, 1874.

CHARACTERS.

Lieutenant Lamb (*late of the Royal Navy*) MR. ED. TERRY

Joe Grill (*his Servant*) ... ... MR. E. H. STEPHENSON

Frank ... ...MR. J. GRAHAM

Peter Pollard (*of "Pollard's" Pale Ale*) MR. W. H. VERNON

Ravenbill ... ...MR. H. COX

Millicent Tremaine (*of Tremaine Hall—a wealthy young lady*)... MISS ADA SWANBOROUGH

Miss Huffin (*her Friend*) ... ... MRS. RAYMOND

Clara Mayfield (*Lamb's Niece*) ... ...MISS MARION TERRY

The Scene is laid in Derbyshire, near Matlock.

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OLD SAILORS

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Plain chamber*; *doors*, R. *and* L., *windows*, L. C., *with curtains*; *door*, R. C., *leading to garden. Table and chairs*, L. C. *and* R. C.

JOE GRILL *heard singing, then enters with letters*, D. R. *in flat, comes down*, L. C. *He is a weatherbeaten old Tar, blunt, honest, and unpleasant.*

JOE. More letters. Ha! Things can't look blacker, that's a blessing. They say when matters comes to the worse they mends. That's little more nor less than a *lie*, that is. If so be as it was *true*, the best thing to do would be to hurry things on until they was at their worst, (*enter* FRANK, *huffy*, D. F., *comes down*, R.) and there you are set up all *right* again. Hulloa, Master Frank, and what's a putting *you* out?

FRA. Nothing. (*sits*)

JOE. The man as lets himself be put out for *nothing* arn't worthy the name of a British female—no, I'm mixing it up—leastways that's next door but one to what I heard at Portsmouth last time the skipper and me was at the theayter there—I never *could* remember them sentiments. What's wrong?

FRA. Why, there's Miss Mayfield walking with that cad, Ravenbill, and talking so familiarly.

JOE. (*whistles aside*) Ay, ay, so the wind's in that quarter is it—verring round to "*jealous.*" Good. Why, Master Frank, why don't you give up all thoughts of Miss Clara? Why don't you look out for a lady of property? A handsome young fellow like you's got his future in his own hands. You ought to make some return to your father, and if you *marries* well, you can *do* so. Miss Mayfield ain't got a ha'penny. You should marry a heiress.

FRA. A what? (*rises and comes* C.)

JOE. A Heiress, and make your father comfortable for life.

FRA. (*gets to* L. *and sits*) And myself wretched. Besides where *are* your heiresses?

JOE. Where *are* your heiresses! Ha! ha! What do you say to Miss Tremaine? up at the hall. Rolling in money, and as they say, rather weedish. Come, Master Frank, you've noticed her

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FRA. Well—a—certainly—really, Grill, you presume a good deal. Were it not that you had been so many years with my father I——

JOE. (*seriously and slowly*) Stop, Master Frank, you know what your father's pension is. Count up. Reflect. Somebody *must* pay the piper. How do we carry on? How *long* can we carry on? Think over it. (*exit*, R. 2 E., *after a searching look at* FRANK.)

FRA. Think over it! Miss Tremaine! Joe Grill's an honest fellow. He *must* be an honest fellow, he's so devilish disagreeable. What did he mean about Miss Tremaine? They say outsiders see more of the game than the players. She's been remarkably polite certainly; but—why should Clara be quite as polite to Ravenbill? *Hang* Ravenbill! That—that is an altogether superfluous remark, because no doubt an appreciating jury will *do* so sooner or later.

CLARA *enters*, D. R.

Clara should know better, and— Oh, have you quite finished your interesting conversation with Mr. Ravenbill?

CLA. (R.) Quite. (*comes down*)

FRA. (L.) It—it *was* interesting of course.

CLA. Highly so.

FRA. Oh, indeed. (*each annoyed and in a temper*)

CLA. You took good care not to interrupt it. You passed without a word.

FRA. Much, no doubt, to Mr. Ravenbill's delight. "Two's company," you know.

CLA. Yes, and in his case capital company.

FRA. Glad you find it so.

CLA. So am I. He can do something besides scowl and contradict and be a bear generally.

FRA. I'd sooner be a bear than a——

CLA. Than a *what?*

FRA. Never mind. A—a less ferocious animal.

CLA. I think you're very rude.

FRA. I'm sure *you* are.

CLA. Don't speak to me again until you know how to address a lady.

FRA. I can learn that accomplishment elsewhere. (*goes up a little*)

CLA. I'm happy to be reminded of the fact. I've no doubt when you come across Miss Tremaine you are polite and pleasant enough. (*crosses to* L.)

FRA. And I'll be bound Ravenbill found you most agreeable.

CLA. (*enraged*) Never presume to speak to me again.

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FRA. (*enraged*) If I do I'm——

LIEUTENANT LAMB *enters* (R. 2 E.) *suddenly. He is a mild, elderly gentleman, gentle, but with a sense of humour.*

LAMB. (C.) Hulloa! Hulloa! I'm—I'm—*what*, Frank! Eh?

FRA. (*chafing*) Oh, it's Clara; she—she puts a man out so.

LAMB. (C.) Aye, aye; the man who resorts to such very strong language to a lady deserves to *be* "put out" and not let *in* again. What is it, Clara, my dear?

CLA. Oh, it's Frank, uncle. I can't look at anybody.

(*sits*, L. H.)

LAMB. (C.) That's very unfortunate for "*anybody*," my dear, for it's very pleasant to *be* looked at by a pair of pretty bright eyes like yours. Come, come, don't squabble about trifles.

FRA. Yes, but I don't call Mr. Ravenbill a trifle.

LAMB. (*suddenly depressed, aside*) No, neither do I, (*sighs*) or what I owe him.

FRA. Ravenbill! indeed! A vulgar hound at the best of it.

LAMB. Come, come, my boy, don't let's begin calling names, because Ravenbill can be at us at *that*. Ravenbill's got eyes in his head, and if a cat may look at a king, any young man may look at a pretty girl—eh, Clara?

CLA. (*tapping her foot, feigned*) Don't know—never *was* a king—I mean a pretty girl.

FRA. Oh yes, you were—and *are*—when you don't let your vanity lead you astray.

CLA. There, uncle, you hear him—my vanity. If there ever was a person *without* vanity it is—— (*crosses*, R.)

Enter RAVENBILL *suddenly*, D. R. F.

RAV. (R.) Beg pardon, Captain Lamb, I trust I'm not——

LAMB. (L., *coldly*) *Mister* Lamb, sir, not Captain. I'm a mere lieutenant, as you know. I don't aspire to a position to which I've no right.

RAV. (*proudly and sulkily*) I'm by no means so sure of *that*.

LAMB. (*aside*; *cowed*) The sneering humbug! Oh, if I could only afford to give him one kick—just one! But I can't afford luxuries.

RAV. Miss Mayfield, you dropped your fan, so I hastened on to restore it.

FRA. (*up at back*) "A matchless up of unconsidered trifles." Hem! Shakespeare!

RAV. Eh?

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FRA. (*severely*) Shakespeare, a Stratford-on-Avon gentleman. Don't suppose you ever heard of him.

(*Exit*, D. F., *with a sneering laugh*)

LAMB. (*annoyed, aside*) Now that's rude, that's remarkably rude.

CLARA *goes to back.*

RAV. (R., *overhearing the aside*) Rude! Ha! ha! He always is rude. I'm sure I have never done anything to call for the animadversions he has in the most uncalled for manner heaped—a——

LAMB. (L. C., *proudly*) Don't, Mr. Ravenbill. My son is hasty. But his motives are invariably dictated by a sense of *honour* which—which *I* endorse.

RAV. (R., *sneering*) Indeed, Captain, I mean, *Mister* Lamb—I beg your pardon. (*aside in his ear*) It's an unfortunate circumstance that you should have endorsed some other trifles beside your son's *honour—bills*, Captain, (beg pardon, *Mister* Lamb) which—(*severely*) which must be *met*, sir.

LAMB. (*in alarm*) Hush! hush! I *beg* of you. Clara, my love. (*she has been at back, busied with the flowers*)

CLA. (C.) Yes, uncle dear.

LAMB. (L.) Mr. Ravenbill and I have a few words on——

CLA. Why didn't you pack me off before? Why of *course* I——

(*goes out rather quickly*, D. F.)

RAV. (*who has watched her admiringly*) Splendid creature! I don't often go to extremes in my laudations of the opposite sex, in whom, as a rule, I do *not* believe; but in this instance, Mr. Lamb, I must say I consider that young lady a supplendid creature.

LAMB. Miss Mayfield should feel honoured by your flattering exception in her favour.

RAV. Don't sneer, Mr. Lamb. Don't sneer.

LAMB. I'm an old sailor, sir, and sailors *never* sneer. We don't know the meaning of the phrase.

RAV. Dear me! Your son makes up for your professional incapacity in that accomplishment. How's the exchequer?

LAMB. Mr. Ravenbill, you know my limited resources.

RAV. Things look bad—devilish bad! I don't see what you're to do. I was a fool to help you to money which you——

LAMB. *Don't!* don't! Mr. Ravenbill. All I want is time. I'll renew—I'll—my son has hopes of a capital appointment. I—I—CC-0. Jangamwadi Math Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

Enter JOE GRILL, D. F.

JOE. (C., *bluntly*) Your clerk wants you.

RAV. (R.) My

JOE. *Clerk.* Ain't deaf, are you?

RAV. Really. Where is he?

JOE. Outside.

RAV. But does he——

JOE. (*abruptly*) Yes, he do.

RAV. (*aside*) Pleasant companion for a series of wet Sundays he'd make. (*Exit*, R. D. F.)

LAMB. (*who has been uneasy*) Joe, Joe, you shouldn't be so—so—*short* in your manner, you——

JOE. (*comes down*) You force me to it. You're too soft-hearted.

LAMB. (*sits*) And you're too hard-headed.

JOE. You think too well of human nature.

LAMB. And you too ill.

JOE. Not a bit. What's human nature ever done for *me*? You've been a victim all your life.

LAMB. (L. H.) I'd sooner give a sixpence to a blind beggar, and find out afterwards that he could *see*, than refuse him. I'd sooner be taken in.

JOE. And wrong the really deserving.

LAMB. Whom I never might come across.

JOE. One of us *must* look to the main chance. Do you know how we stand?

LAMB. No. Sometimes it's a wonder to me how we stand at *all*.

JOE. If I didn't contrive to make both ends meet why,——

LAMB. Ay, ay, Joe, you're too extravagant. *Why* make both ends meet; why not make one meet and the other one *bread?*

JOE. Bah! You half starve yourself as it *is*.

LAMB. Starve myself! Why I gorge, I simply *gorge*.

JOE. Not *you*. Then you've docked your usual allowance of grog.

LAMB. It was making me *fat*, Joe,—a perfect porpoise.

JOE. *You* a porpoise! You're a red herring.

LAMB. So was Lord Nelson—(*raising his hat*) rest his memory.

JOE. (*after slight pause*) Ah, *he* was an admiral.

LAMB. He was, and deserved to be.

JOE. You know you've been neglected, passed over, snubbed, forgotten, and yet you don't bear no malice. Where's your spirit?

LAMB. Bottled (*grunt*), bottled, Joe Grill, my old friend. Corked down and hidden away amidst the dust and cobwebs of faded hopes, and aspirations that I have lived to see decay one by one, until there's nothing left but the fading remembrance of the days when I was a bright lad, sent to sea to

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become a great man, and rolled back by the waves of time to find myself, at fifty-five years, poor old Lieutenant Lamb, and nothing more. (*sits*, L.)

JOE. (*after a pause*) It's—it's a shame! You've seen six times the service of many prosperous men of your age—you was always as brave as a lion—your very name was a joke to—

LAMB. Don't, Joe! Don't—you make me blush.

JOE. You make *me* blush when you speak so civil to that Ravenbill.

LAMB. But I'm in the fellow's power.

JOE. You can't renew them bills—you mustn't do it. You must defy him.

LAMB. But I've had the money.

JOE. He must wait—Master Frank must marry a *heiress* and——

LAMB. But his cousin——

JOE. I've had my say—if you're a going to talk about that boy and girl romance, all I can say is you'd better address your observations to the *butcher*.

LAMB. (*indignant*) Joe, I won't allow——

JOE. Nor more won't *he*—no more credit. (*goes up, aside*) I'm right—I *know* I'm right, and I'll do it! If he kicks me out I—I'll come back again. (*Exit*, D. F. R.)

LAMB. (*who has been chafing, after a pause*) Joe—Joe! Hem! JOSEPH! No, he's off—what's to be done, what's to be done! (MILLICENT *opens door*)

MIL. Anybody at home?

LAMB. Oh yes. (*Enters*)

MIL. I hoped to find Miss Mayfield in, Mr. Lamb.

LAMB. She's somewhere handy; meanwhile, in her absence, Miss Tremaine, may I not hope to be an unworthy substitute? Don't run away, I pray. (*offers chair*)

MIL. (C.) Gallant as usual, Mr. Lamb, but I *will* wait till your niece comes in if I may. My companion, Miss Huffin, is with me, and——(*crosses*, L. C., *sits*)

LAMB. (*at door*) Pray walk in, madam. (*bows in* MISS HUFFIN, *a youngish old person in spectacles*)

MISS H. Thanks, I'm *sure*.

LAMB. (*places chairs*) Sit down, ladies. Miss Huffin, if you find that chair giving, mention it; furniture is *not* our strong point.

MISS H. (L.) Oh, my dear Millicent, did you ever *see* such a likeness?

LAMB. (*looking round, fidgetly*) Eh! What likeness? Didn't know we—a——

MISS H. Mr. Lamb, to the Earl of Loppington, you know—don't you see it? They might be brothers.

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MIL. (L.C.) I don't see the faintest resemblance.

MISS H. Oh, my dear, just the same haughty curl of the lip. You know the dear Earl, of course, Mr. Lamb?

LAMB. (R. C.) Well, no! Miss Guffin, I——

MISS H. Huffin!

LAMB. Beg pardon—Huffin! *No*, I can't say I *do* know the dear Earl. My acquaintances rank rather lower in the social scale—I know a good many "dear *tradesmen*," who——

MISS H. Tradesmen, Mr. Lamb? A man of *your* birth—remember what is due to——

LAMB. (*quickly*) Oh, I *do*, I *do!* (*aside*) They take care I shan't forget it.

MIL. You see, Mr. Lamb, Miss Huffin's weakness is high birth—the aristocracy—blue blood, and all that.

MISS H. Quite so. In these horrid levelling days it's necessary to know who's who. You, for instance, Mr. Lamb, though you never mention the fact, I know all about your family.

MIL. Your birth she means, you know.

LAMB. Oh! ah! (*aside*) I dare say she *does* know all about *that;* she's old enough to remember it.

MIL. Talking about "family," where is that plebeian, Mr. Pollard? He stopped on the way I verily believe——

MISS H. To leave one of the cards of his horrid brewery at a tavern we passed. I'm sure of it. He glories in his horrid business.

MIL. (*severely*) Oh, no! Mr. Pollard wouldn't be likely to forget himself—and *me*—in such a manner.

(LAMB *speaks aside to* MILLICENT)

MISS H. (*aside*) She's fond of the wretch, I know it. It'll take all my finessing to avoid an ignoble alliance of Norman blood with pale ale.

LAMB. (*aside*) Pollard! Pollard! Why he's the great brewer, surely. I'll cultivate Pollard.

POL. (*heard without*) If ever I attempt my own life by taking such stuff, may I be— (*appears at door carrying a carriage rug over his arm*) Ladies, I have run you to earth——a—— (*stops on seeing* LAMB)

LAMB. (R.) Your servant, sir. Walk in.

POL. (C.) Thank you. Confiding people you are about here. Locks, bolts, and bars appear to be at a discount—it's quite Arcadian—not *Lowther* Arcadian, but the genuine article.

LAMB. Praise from, sir——

POL. Just so, is praise indeed. I say, my dear Mr. Lamb—nobody's introduced me, but I know you *are* Mr. Lamb. (*aside*) He looks it. (*to him*) Allow me to ask you an important question.

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LAMB. (*amused*) Very good, Mr. Pollard, nobody's introduced us but—a——

POL. Ha! ha! Just so. (*aside*) Lamb's lively. The important question was—a——(*seriously*) Where do you get your beer from?

LAMB. (*slily*) Malt and hops. Where do you get *yours?*

POL. (*taken aback*) Eh?

MIL. Ha! ha! ha!

MISS H. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

POL. (*first looks at one and then the other, annoyed at being chaffed; aside*) What trifles amuse women. I say, Lamb, trifles amuse women, don't they?

LAMB. *Miserable* trifles. You appear to be entertaining them. (*ladies laugh*)

POL (*aside, turns*) Lamb! Rubbish! a downier old sheep—I may say a "*south* downier" old sheep—never made mutton. He's too much for me.

MIL. (*rises*) But why do you want to know? Are you going to send Mr. Lamb a cask for home consumption?

POL. Eh—a—Why of *course* I am. It's just what I was going to say.

MIL. I thought so.

POL. Anything to preserve you from being poisoned by the nearest hostelry, where I dropped in just know. (*aside to* LAMB) The Dragon—If you deal there make your will, and send for your relations at once. I'll send you a barrel and save your life.

LAMB. The smallest donations thankfully received.

MIL. (*aside*) If all I hear is fact, poor gentleman, there's a half-dozen words of genuine truth in *that* small jest. (*she and* POLLARD *go up,* C.)

LAMB. (*to* MISS HUFFIN) Are you fond of flowers, Miss Duffin?

MISS H. Huffin, Mr. Lamb, Huffin.

LAMB. Really, my head——

MISS H. The Northamptonshire Huffins; not the Wiltshire Huffins. They are people of yesterday. We came over with the Conqueror.

LAMB. (*aside*) I believe she did.

MISS H. "Fond of flowers,"—what a question!

LAMB. If you will honour me by looking this way, I've a few specimens which I think are——

MISS H. (*going*) Oh, delighted! Flowers, Mr. Lamb, are —the very— a——

LAMB. (*going*) Yes, yes, they *are.*

MISS H. In the susceptible breast they, of all nature's works, arouse—a——

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LAMB. Oh, they do, they *do*—you're quite right.

MISS H. I see you are a sympathetic nature.

LAMB. Believe me, Miss Muffin, I——*(they go off,* D. R. F. MILLICENT *and* POLLARD *come down)*

POL. You're too bad. You're always shewing me up. Here I take a bachelor's box in order to be near you, and——

MIL. "Bachelor's box." Bachelors don't want boxes, a carpet bag is good enough for them.

POL. You're too hard upon a fellow. I can't help being a brewer.

MIL. Can't help it! I suppose a man's not compelled to be a brewer, any more than he's compelled to be a coal-heaver, or a beadle, or a "man at the wheel," or anything dreadful. There's no *law* to compel a man to devote his life to malt.

POL. No; any more than there is any law to compel a woman to give herself wildly up to *hops.* (*aside*) That's severe, I think.

MIL. I beg your pardon.

POL. A—parties—dances, you know. What a nuisance it is to have to explain a fellow's jokes.

MIL. Pardon my density; the next time you are going to say something smart and cutting—a——

POL. Yes?

MIL. Mention the fact.

POL. My father was in the business before me; made his money by it.

MIL. More shame for him.

POL. That's *your* opinion. Beer's a bulwark of the British constitution.

MIL. *Which* constitution it does its best to destroy.

POL. On the contrary, it's highly nourishing and invigorating, and is strongly recommended by the faculty. (*goes up*)

MIL. Oh, don't talk like an advertisement. Pollard's pale ale, indeed! Thank goodness I never tasted it.

(*sits,* L. H.)

POL. No, it's not intended for persons like yourself.

MIL. Oh, indeed!

POL. It's manufactured for the support of those who *work,* not for those who live in idleness and allow others to work for them.

MIL. Well, I'm sure!

POL. (*quietly*) Yes, I'm *positive.*

MIL. Why, your name's a bye-word. It's on every lip.

POL. The more lips it's on the better for the business.

MIL. It's only last week I overheard, as I was driving, two young men discussing what they should take, that one

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dreadful creature said, "Oh, better make it a pint of 'Pollard.'"

POL. (*aside*) That's *bitter*.

MIL. I actually shuddered as I heard it.

POL. Ah, you're sensitive.

MIL. Why don't you *change* your name?

POL. That's what I want YOU to do. (*sits*, L.C.) Pollard's a good name enough, and suggests a good old family *tree*. We can't be *all* born Tremaines. In these advanced and common-sense days honesty and success, when they go hand in hand, are generally permitted to stand side by side with high birth and gentle breeding. Your father and mine were firm friends—the baronet and the brewer were like brothers. Why shouldn't their son and daughter be like——

MIL. Like brother and sister?

POL. (*bursting out*) No, hang it all, anything but *that!* (*rises*)

MIL. (*rises*) Do not imagine I am blind to your good heart—your honest, unselfish nature. No. (*gives him her hand*) Believe me, *Peter*—(*in horror*) PETER! Oh, that your father could have done you such a double injury—left you the *brewery* and christened you *Peter!*

POL. I glory in the brewery! I revel in Peter! I wouldn't be an idle man of fortune and be called "Augustus" not for——

MIL. Not if it made all the difference in your future matrimonial prospects?

POL. *My* future! Ha! ha! I'm not blind, Millicent.

MIL. And I'm not *deaf*, *Mr.* Pollard.

POL. I beg your pardon, *Miss* Tremaine, I forgot at the moment who I was—I thought I was that smug-faced young Frank here, who is permitted to play with your Christian name as if it was common property.

MIL. (*annoyed; after a slight pause*) He can boast of his birth.

POL. So can all animals—from the elephant to the toad. There's nothing *clever* in being born. The asylum for idiots is full of people who have been talented enough to accomplish the fact.

MIL. (*with dignity*) Our fathers were friends. But my father enjoined me almost with his last breath not to disgrace the family by a mesalliance. Our family is an old one.

POL. (*half aside*) Old enough to know better.

MIL. Just so. The gentleman whom you have thought proper to ridicule traces his descent——

POL. Oh, bother people who trace their descent; give me the people who can *trace their rise*—any fool can come down in the world.

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MIL. Pecuniary failure means nothing

POL. Doesn't it?

MIL. No. There is a dignity in misfortune.

POL. That's according to how much it pays in the pound.

MIL. Trade and its selfish, narrow-minded faith has eaten into your very system, Peter Pollard. The subject sickens me.

POL. (*bows*) It shall not do so any more. (*goes up, aside*) I'll go and sicken Lamb. (*Exit*, D.F.R.)

MIL. (*goes up*) I'm fond of him! Oh, yes, I'm *fond* of him, *in a way*! He's honest, and generous, and—a—truthful, and all that; but *romance!* Fancy a romantic brewer! I love to quarrel with him, and yet I always feel that I have had the worst of it. (*takes out a paper*) He despises poetry, or *says* he does. *I* don't! I love it, and Frank knows I do. How handsome he is! How different from——(*becomes absorbed in the paper*)

Enter LIEUTENANT LAMB *with a nosegay of flowers.*

LAMB. (D.F.R.)Ha, Miss Tremaine, all alone! I've just culled a trifling nosegay—common flowers—with the hope that——

MIL. Oh, thank you, Mr. Lamb! I love what they call *common* flowers; poor hot-house exotics always put me in mind of patients at the watering places—too delicate to be disturbed! Ha! Ha! Really I——

Enter JOE GRILL *abruptly*, D.F.; *comes down*, R.

JOE. Beg pardon, which, by-the-bye, Grigory *don't.*

MIL. "Grigory!" and who might "Grigory" be?

JOE. Saving your presence, miss, he's the baker.

LAMB. (C., *uncomfortable; aside*) Joe, Joe, I—I wonder at you.

JOE. (*aside, pleased*) It's took—the stratagem's took.

MIL. And—excuse me, Mr. Lamb, but your servant is so deliciously gauche—*what* might Mr.—a——

JOE. Grigory.

MIL. Exactly—require?

JOE. Well, miss, he's the baker. Bakers requires their *bills paid.*

LAMB. (*in great concern, aside*) Joe, Joe! you might have spared me this. (*up*)

MIL. (C., *severely*) I see, Mr.—a——(*crosses to* C.)

JOE. Grill, miss. Joseph Grill, able-bodied seaman, *retired.*

MIL. Just so. (*with her hand out*) Mr. Lamb, *neighbour.* I want a word or two with you. (*at* JOE) *Alone.*

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LAMB. (L., *confused*) Exactly. I—a—Joe. A—*go to the devil.*

JOE. I'm *there*, sir. (*exit, sharp*, D. R. 2 E.)

MIL. (*after pressing her hand to her side*) Mr. Lamb, a—(*pause*) Won't you sit down? (*sits*)

LAMB. Well, I do feel a little undecided about the knees. (*sits*)

MIL. Mr. Lamb, your son has—has—(*aside*) I feel scarlet.

LAMB. If the earth would kindly open and swallow me, I should feel obliged to it.

MIL. I hardly know how to approach this——(*the door suddenly opens and* FRANK *bursts in*)

FRA. Father, I——(*awkward pause of all three*)

LAMB. (*after a slight pause, aside*) I wonder how Old Duffin's getting on. I left her with the gooseberries. I wonder if she's left any of the gooseberries with *me*. (*sneaks off*, D. F. R.)

FRA. You honour our humble cottage.

MIL. (*aside*, R. C.) I can't beat about the bush; I never could. (*aloud*) There appears to be something on your father's mind.

FRA. I believe he has been harassed in some way lately, but he is so unselfish and kind that he has kept the cause entirely from me.

MIL. Accident has informed me of the actual facts. Your father is penniless.

FRA. Miss Tremaine—I—(*aside*) I can hardly understand this girl.

MIL. (*rises*) I may appear abrupt and strange, and probably officious, in meddling in this affair; but pardon me, I take so great an interest in—(*with a slight movement towards him, which she checks*) in your father—and—and your cousin, that I thus interfere, seeing as I do the motives which actuate kind, amiable Mr. Lamb in disguising the truth. Ruin hangs over his head. Can you see no way to save him?

FRA. (*aside, goes* L. *and back*) A thousand apparent trifles rise to my mind confirming this. What a blind idiot have I been not to—(*aside*) Oh, my poor old dad, I'd—I'd lay down my life to save him from shame and dishonour. (*to her*) I have been promised an appointment by my old friend Richards at——

MIL. It was filled yesterday. I hear often from his sister. Besides, it would have taken you from your father, and he needs your companionship—your help.

FRA. But I can stay no longer and be a burden on——

MIL. (*quickly*, R.) No—that's it.

FRA. (*aside*) What can she mean?

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MIL. You should remain near him, and *still* be no burden; but, on the contrary, a help—a——

FRA. (C.) But how could I achieve such a——)

MIL. Get married. (*music, piano*)

FRA. I! a penniless——

MIL. (*goes*, R.) Money again! That wretched money! are there not those who look to something better, nobler? to whose good graces a pleasant person, good education, the feelings and manners of a gentleman, and above all, "birth," are ample passports? Especially to one who has more money than she knows what to do with?

FRA. Marry for money?

MIL. If you see any other way to save your father——

FRA. (*aside*) If it didn't savour of overwhelming vanity I should imagine she was actually *proposing* to me.

MIL. Can you see nothing of the kind in the immediate neighbourhood? Is it mere affectation, or are you so wilfully blind that——(*turns aside*)

FRA. Miss Tremaine, *Millicent*, if I dared to hope that—— (*as he seizes her hand rapturously she turns towards him*)

Enter LAMB *with* MISS HUFFIN; *both see the action.*

LAMB. (L. C.) Hehem! I didn't see anything, did *you*, Miss Biffin?

MISS H. (L. H.) Nothing whatever.

(FRANK *and* MILLICENT *speak apart in low, earnest voices*)

Enter CLARA, *followed by* RAVENBILL.

RAV. I assure you it was the most remarkable circumstance you ever——

CLA. (*aside*, L. C.) How earnestly they converse. She gives her hand, which *he*—(*turning to* RAVENBILL *with forced gaiety*) Go on! Pray go on, dear Mr. Ravenbill, I am so delighted with the story.

FRA. (*aside*, R.) Heartless jilt! And for a fellow like *that*. (*renews his attentions to* MILLICENT)

POL. (*entering quickly*, D. F. R.; *to* MILLICENT) Your coachman says the brown mare's growing restive and——(*sees the state of affairs and stops blankly*)

MIL. (R. C.) Good morning, Mr. Lamb. (*shakes hands with* LAMB) You don't mind my taking your son from you. (*takes* FRANK'S *arm and gets to door.* LAMB *and* POLLARD *are staring in a condition of blank stupidity*)

MIL. (*then she gets to door, to* CLARA *in a bland voice*) You can spare your cousin for a little time. (CLARA *enraged, but controls herself*)

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MIL. (*at the door on* FRANK'S *arm, severely, to* POLLARD) Bring the rug! (*goes out with* FRANK)

LAMB. (*blankly*) I—a—I—I'm in the clouds!

RAV. (*comes c.; delighted, to* CLARA) And you will permit me to escort you to Whittaker's. (*aside*) She's mine! (*offers arm*)

CLA. (*gushingly*) Oh! thanks.

(*they go out,* D. F. R.)

POL. (*in a vacant condition*) Well, I am——(*moves towards door*; MISS HUFFIN *takes his arm amiably*)

MISS H. So am I. They were *made* for each other. Don't you think so?

POL. No, I don't. (*exit abruptly with* MISS HUFFIN *on his arm*)

LAMB. Joe! Joe Grill! I—(*sinks into his chair*)—I'm—I'm lost!

JOE. Lost!—not a bit of it, you're SAVED.

LAMB *shakes his head doubtingly and puzzled.* JOE, *holding his hand, pats him reassuringly on the back as the Act Drop descends rather slowly; a melody in the orchestra swelling as it falls.*

Time of Act, 26 minutes.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A sequestered spot close by the Mill Tower, a huge perpendicular rock,* L., *the river flowing at its base.* RAVENBILL *discovered.*

RAV. This is the spot they've selected. And it's nearly time for them to arrive. A picnic, eh! and Mr. Ravenbill of course *not* invited to join, though they know I'm as good as engaged to Clara Mayfield. I'm not good enough for them, I suppose. That upstart young Frank is though. Ha! ha! I've cut *him* out anyhow, an insolent cur. Not but what there's a preponderance of the "shilly shally" element in Clara. I can't get her to come to the point. In case she throw me over, I can't see sufficient evidence of an engagement for an action. It's unsatisfactory, is decidedly unsatisfactory.

(*Enter* CLARA L.)

Ah, my dear Miss Mayfield—may I not say Clara? punctual, more than punctual,

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CLA. Why; did you know I was coming here?

RAV. (R. C.) Else why am *I* here?

CLA. But you're not invited to the——

RAV. No, no, certainly not. My Lady Bountiful don't like me. He—hem! *Mr. Frank* don't like me. Consequently cold shoulder, and *not* lobster salad for Septimus Ravenbill. Ha! ha! rather neat that, I think. But could I let the day pass without seeing my Clara?

CLA. Mr. Ravenbill, excuse me, really such familiarity——

(*crosses*, R.)

RAV. Clara Mayfield, you're playing fast and loose with me. I begin to think you're using me as a catspaw, Clara Mayfield.

CLA. A what, sir?

RAV. A catspaw—a blind—a tool, a stalking horse, a masked battery, Clara Mayfield. You'll allow me to observe that I strongly object to playing second fiddle, to eating humble pie, or to assuming the functions of a warming pan, or as our American cousins have it, "to taking a back seat."

CLA. Mr. Ravenbill, have you been indulging in any refreshment? (*goes up*, R.)

RAV. No, Clara Mayfield, I have *not*. I may add that for some time I have been off my refreshment. I have not made the meals I have been accustomed to, neither have I enjoyed that peaceful repose which a feather bed and an easy conscience have combined for many years to afford me. Need I say you are the cause? Add to your previous distracting influence the fatal art of "shilly shallying," of not knowing your own mind, of "playing with my feelings," Clara, and I won't answer for the consequences.

CLA. I haven't the remotest notion what you are talking about, and you'll excuse me for saying that I fancy you are in the same ignorant condition.

RAV. (*with malice*) I mean that I don't believe you're half off with the old love—that you have a lingering liking for that boy sweetheart. If you make a fool of *me* I'll——

JOE GRILL *appears*, L. 2 E., *abruptly, carrying an enormous pie, covered with a napkin.*

JOE. I *would* if I was you. But I wouldn't let all the world know as two lovyers was a quarrelling.

CLA. Joe, how *can* you be so absurd? (RAVENBILL *and* CLARA *turn up a little*)

JOE. (*aside*) It's to be hoped they won't fall out, for everything's a working beautiful up to present time. (*to* CLARA) I've out-sailed the skipper, though he does tell me I'm getting puffy. (*calls off*) All right, your honour. Take it easy.

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RAV. What have you got there?

JOE. What have I got there? Ha! ha! That's a pie, that is. Behold me unveil the stattey! (*takes off napkin*) What do you think of that?

RAV. (*tapping it*) Noble! Fine, firm, sturdy, unrelenting crust, I should say!

(CLARA *is seated on rock at back*)

JOE. That there crust is *my* manyfacter. I was ship's cook for four year, and in regards of a crust I won't give in to no one. As we was invited I thought as we'd shew Miss Tremaine as we could turn out pastry with the best of 'em. (*raps the pie*) There, d'ye hear that? There's a constitootion!

RAV. It does you credit. (*to him aside*) I say, she's still a little "stand offish."

JOE. (*aside to him*) Persevere, persevere. Bless your 'art, when she's at home she's never tired of talking of you.

RAV. (*pleased*) Ain't she though? That's very pleasant—that's uncommon pleasant. Joe—a—here's a half-cr——I mean here's a shilling for you.

JOE. Thank ye, sir.

RAV. Whenever you have an opportunity, Joe, just say something in my favour—just by accident, you know. Whenever it comes off, you know, Joe, I shan't forget you. Any little hints you like to throw out about young Mr. Frank's attentions in *another* quarter—you know, Joe—*eh?* He! he! he! (*nudges* JOE)

JOE. (*laughing with him*) He! he! he! You're a deep'un, Mister Ravenbill. He! he! he! (*gives* RAVENBILL *a good drive in the ribs*)

RAV. (*wincing*) Just so. (*aside*) The nautical elbow runs sharpish. (*goes to* CLARA)

Enter LAMB; *he is warm, and hurries*, L. 2 E.

LAMB. Phew! here's a broiler. (*aside*) That Ravenbill again with Clara. I don't like it—*she* don't like it—nobody likes it but Joe.

JOE. (*aside to* LAMB, *nudging him*) I say, sir, they don't make such a bad looking couple, eh?

LAMB. Oil and vinegar, Joe Grill—oil and vinegar.

JOE. Well, and a werry good mixture, too, as any well reggleated salad 'll certify.

LAMB. I don't like it, Joe Grill—I don't like it.

JOE. I've seen you put a tidy lot of it away, too.

LAMB. Psha! She was always destined for Frank, you know she was.

JOE. (c.) Well, s'pose she was. Ain't he always gallivanting up at the Hall? Traipsing off there on every possible ox-

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cuse. He's dazzled with the heiress, and a good thing too.

LAMB. (L.) No, it isn't a good thing. It's all wrong. We're not in a position to mix with wealthy folks. I've come to this picnic affair under protest. I've—I've brought this beer under protest. (*takes out two large bottles of beer from his pocket*) What would Gregory say if he saw us luxuriating in this lavish manner? I tell you what, Joseph Grill—it's—it's—scarcely *honest*, sir.

JOE. Bless your honour's innocent heart, Grigory's that polite you wouldn't know him. Do you suppose people haven't eyes and ears? Everybody's a congratulating you on your matrimonial prospects.

LAMB. What, Miss Clara, and——

JOE. Bah! T'other two. (*goes up*; *as* JOE *goes up*, RAVENBILL *comes down*, R. C.)

LAMB. (*down*; *aside*) "T'other two." I once thought Joe had feelings, but now I——(JOE *and* CLARA *up*)

RAV. (*slaps* LAMB *on back*) Wake up, my jolly old Benbow!

LAMB. (*quietly*) He—hem! You're a very worthy man, and I'm under great obligations to you, but if you do that again I'll be d——d if I don't knock you down.

RAV. Ha! ha! What a fire-eater you are, Mr. Lamb. It's exuberance of spirits, sir. She's almost given her word, sir.

LAMB. I'm deeply grieved to——

RAV. Eh!

LAMB. I mean I'm delighted to hear it.

MIL. (*heard without*) You'll be charmed at the spot, I'm certain.

CLA. (*at back*, R., *aside*) That designing woman!

RAV. (R. C., *aside*) Miss T.

JOE. (*aside*, *at back*) The heiress!

LAMB. (L., *fidgetty*) He—hem! here's Miss Tremaine—a—Clara, my dear, I, excuse me—(*pushing past* RAVENBILL *abruptly*—RAVENBILL *is looking off*) Clara, do I—do I look all right? I hurried here so that—just put me straight. (CLARA *arranges his neckcloth, etc. As she is doing so,* JOE *places beer and pie up back, then off,* L. MILLICENT *enters with* FRANK, L. 2 E.) *They do not at first perceive the others, who are well up at back*

MIL. You were really too severe upon poor Mr. Pollard. He has a marvellous temper, you must admit.

FRA. Oh yes, he's good tempered enough. You must allow you were occasionally rather hard on him.

MIL. Do *you* object to that?

FRA. (R. C.) On the contrary, it's delightful to see him

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driven to his wits' end—not a very long drive by the way—and utterly unable to reply. (*goes up*)

MIL. (L., *aside*) I don't quite care to hear poor Peter sneered at either. If I lead him a life myself, I don't care to hear him snubbed by anyone else. Ha, Miss Mayfield! (*goes to her, shakes hands with her and* LAMB; *they are up* C. RAVENBILL, L.)

FRA. (*aside*, R.) That fellow, Ravenbill, as usual, dogging her footsteps! I was right! She never cared for me.

RAV. (*at back*, L., *aside*) The young puppy evidently delights her. Well, some women are easily pleased.

MIL. (C., *to* CLARA) My dear Miss Mayfield, I never saw you look so charming. (*aside*) Well, what Frank could have seen in *her*. (*shrugs her shoulder*)

CLA. (R. C., *aside*) Well, I must say I pity Frank's taste.

LAMB. (*aside*) I'm getting deucedly peckish. I don't see any signs of food except Joe's pie, and that I'm afraid, though a well-meaning contribution, will scarcely be appreciated. (*goes to* FRANK, R.)

MIL. But how is it I see no preparations for that all important affair—luncheon? Having sent away my cook for insolence at a moment's notice, I sent orders to the Tremaine Arms, in the village, for an elaborate little spread, and desired them to send a reliable waiter to attend. I don't even see the *waiter* much less the—how is it that—(*sees* RAVENBILL; *crosses*, C.) Oh, *there* he is, of course. (*to* RAVENBILL) Here, sir, haven't you had your instructions? Where *is* everything? Don't stare! Dear! dear! I wish Mr. Jones had sent a *sensible* servant.

RAV. (L., *swelling with injured pride*; *aside*) Takes—takes me for a waiter!

LAMB. (R.C., *who has overheard this*) Ha! ha! ha! Miss Tremaine, you're—Ha! ha! You're mistaken. This gentleman is Mr. Ravenbill, a person of considerable——

FRA. (R.) Ha! ha! ha! By Jove, Ravenbill, you should be proud that you have passed for anything so respectable.

CLA. (R. C., *indignant*) The utter want of decent taste exhibited in such a remark as *that* is only to be excelled by its sheer inanity. The elevated sphere in which you have been recently moving, Frank, has evidently not improved you. (*slightly at* MILLICENT)

LAMB. (*aside*) Hear! hear! When a woman wants to plant a stinger, she generally succeeds in so doing. In the feminine prize-ring every blow tells. And then the marvellous manner in which the delightful combatants "come up smiling." Hating each other like poison all the while, too.

RAV. (*delighted, aside*) She sticks up for me. She takes

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the retort out of my mouth. I'd accept any amount of insolence on the same terms.

MIL. (L. C.) The remark was so ludicrously personal that any one save one *wilfully* blind (*at* CLARA) must have seen it was a mere piece of pleasantry. (*goes to* RAVENBILL.) Pray pardon my very ridiculous mistake. A second glance would have convinced me of my absurd error, and I am *so* short-sighted. I trust as Mr. Lamb's friend, you——

LAMB. (*hastily*) No! no! no! he's no friend of—I mean to say yes, just so, exactly. (*aside*) It's grown remarkably warm, I fancy.

MIL. Mr. Ravenbill will permit me to atone for my silly mistake by begging him to—to——

LAMB. (*interposing*) Exactly. To just walk round to the Tremaine Arms and ask how the deuce it is they haven't sent the lunch.

MIL. No, no. I wasn't going——

RAV. (*politely*) Miss Tremaine I—(*aside*) an opportunity for retiring with dignity. I'll shew them I've a soul above lobster salad. That, morally, I'm a cut above cold fowl. I *was* going in that direction, and I will see that your commands are immediately—(*he is bowing off backwards at the side when he comes bump against* PETER POLLARD, *who has a camp stool under each arm; a croquet chair shut up in one hand; the stool hits him on the head*)

POL. Hulloa! mind where you're going. Quite right to back out of the presence of royalty though. Ha, knocked your head against the camp stool, eh? Don't apologise, it's a very strong one. (*opens the chairs, etc.*)

MIL. (C., *with dignified severity*) Mr. Pollard, where's the luncheon?

POL. Coming. Be here directly. Oh, by the way, I didn't order it at the Tremaine Arms. I went there, but happening to cast my eyes over the door I saw the name of their brewers "Chigway and Dollop." Now any man who can descend to to get his beer from Chigway and Dollop is simply——

MIL. So we're to starve because your rivals are—(*goes,* R.)

POL. Rivals! (*crosses,* L. C.) Chigway and Dollop, wholesale dealers in poison, purveyors of—rivals! a—here's the luncheon. Mrs. Greenwood at the lodge and I settled it all. I made the lobster salad myself, and there's a cold round of beef that'll come as a relief after the indigestible and unpronounceable relays of richness you lay up your visitors with at the Hall. Miss Huffin is walking with the boy—shewing him the way. Happy boy. (*to* FRANK) Now then, help with the cloth. (*flings table-cloth to* FRANK, *and goes to side*

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beckoning the lunch-man. RAVENBILL *has been talking up with* LAMB *and* CLARA. CLARA *watches* FRANK. MILLICENT *and* FRANK, R.)

RAV. (L.) And now farewell, Miss Tremaine, I—(*bows*) May—a—good digestion wait on—what's the word?—and something else on—Ha! ha! it's escaped me for the moment. (*aside to* CLARA) Miss Mayfield—Clara. (*kisses her hand and exit jauntily;* CLARA *has been looking at* FRANK, *and listlessly allowed him*)

FRA. (*who has watched the act, indignantly*) Why confound it, he—he——

MIL. (R., *surprised at his manner*) Why, what is it? (*slight pause*)

FRA. (R.) Oh, nothing! (*aside*) He kissed her hand. She permitted it. (*turns and talks to* MILLICENT *with forced attention*)

CLARA. (L., *aside*) How he looks into her eyes, as tenderly —*more* tenderly than he ever——

POL. (C., *taking the table-cloth from* FRANK) Thank you! (*begins spreading on slope at back*)

LAMB. (L.C., *looking off*, L.) Where's Joe got to? He was here a few minutes back, and——

(POLLARD, *who has been laying the cloth, bumps backwards against* LAMB)

LAMB. I beg your pardon. You're rather hurt?

POL. Not at all. Don't mention it. Here's the luncheon. (*the boy enters, carrying the things*) Mr. Lamb, lend a hand. (*takes the things from man, and hands them to* LAMB, *who places them on the table-cloth.* JOE *enters with a large earthenware jug*)

JOE. Cold spring water, your honour—from the gamekeeper's cottage, there. (JOE *assists in laying the things*)

POL. Mind the lobster salad. It's the experience of a lifetime. (*gives it* LAMB)

LAMB (*sniffing*) What a bouquet! (*gives it* JOE)

JOE. (*aside*) Calls a lobster a "bokay."

POL. (L. C.) Chicken and ham. (*business*)

LAMB. (R.) Chicken and ham!

JOE. (R. C., *taking it*) Chicken *an dam.*

LAMB. Ham! Ham!

JOE. Well, I *said* am. (*aside*) What's the matter with the skipper this arternoon?

POL. And there's the beef. That's a picture.

LAMB. Quite so. It's a picture we'll do our best to frame. Eh, Mr. Pollard?

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POL. Ha! Ha! Just so. Mustard, salt, pepper. Yes—let me see, there's something missing.

LAMB. Perhaps—I merely throw out the suggestion for what it's worth—but—a— perhaps it's pickles.

POL. It is. (*strikes* LAMB *on the back*) You've hit it.

LAMB. (*mildly*) Excuse *me*, YOU'VE hit it.

POL. But life without pickles is—Oh, it's all right; here's old Huffin. She's a splendid substitute.

Enter MISS HUFFIN, *with a bunch of wild flowers.*

MISS H. (*sits*, L.; *aside*) A less gallant couple of gentlemen I *never* met. Leaving me entirely by myself. Even the person with the food deserted me.

LAMB. (*to her; crosses*) Excuse me; but have you got the pickles?

MISS H. (*with sour severity*) Sir! *What* pickles?

LAMB. (*aside*) *What* pickles! Hot pickles. She's eaten 'em. She's eaten 'em coming along.

POL. (*having finished the arrangements*) There! behold the banquet. (*sits by it*)

MIL. Bravo! Capital!

JOE. (*unable to control himself*) Hooray! Brayvo our side.

MISS H. (*horrified*) Eh! (*looks at him severely through her glasses;* MILLICENT *also observes him;* JOE *uncomfortable*)

LAMB. (*seated*) Joe!

JOE. Your honour.

LAMB. Your sentiments, though loyal, and doing infinite credit to your head and heart, are *not* required.

FRANK *has been receiving the plates from* POLLARD; *takes them round, with knife and fork, and the chicken and lobster, to* CLARA, MISS MILLICENT, *and* MISS HUFFIN; *they begin to eat.*

MIL. Now, Miss Mayfield, pray try to enjoy yourself. This is, after all, the proper hour for the principal meal. Eight o'clock dinner is a mere mockery.

CLA. Thanks, I have very little appetite.

MISS H. Just *my* case; indeed, *I* never know what an appetite is in this weather. (*helps herself to about three times as much as anyone else*)

FRA. (*who sits and eats*; *at* CLARA) Ha! Want of appetite is generally one of the signs of *love*, I believe.

MISS H. I assure you that I——

FRA. (*abruptly*) I wasn't alluding to *you*.

MISS H. (*shut up*) Oh! (*crosses*, R.)

CLA. Then whom were you alluding to?

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FRA. (*bitterly*) Ha! ha! How innocent we are.

LAMB. (*with his mouth full*) We are, we are.

JOE. (*at back, with pie; aside*) Nobody don't seem to take to the pie. It's foolish of 'em, tremenjous foolish. It'd satisfy 'em ever so much sooner.

POL. Mr. Grill.

JOE. (*smartly*) Sir.

POL. Champagne.

JOE. Right. (*begins opening a bottle*)

FRA. Clara, you like champagne?

CLA. You know I never touch it.

LAMB. (*eating*) No, never touches it. Ha! ha! for a very good reason. Can't afford it.

MIL. And no deprivation, Mr. Lamb. Champagne I believe to be excessively unwholesome. For my part I never take it.

MISS H. (*taking the fullest glass on the tray from* JOE) Neither do I.

LAMB. Eh?

MISS H. Except at picnics.

POL. Ah, well, champagne's all very well—its a fashion—it's expensive—but give me beer.

JOE. (*suddenly seizing a bottle*) Here you are.

POL. (FRANK *and* MILLICENT *spoon*) Thank you. But—(*looks at label*)

JOE. (*knowingly*) It's "Pollards."

POL. (*pleased*) By Jove, so it is.

LAMB. (*innocently*) You're not afraid of it, are you?

POL. Not exactly. Join me. It'll do you more good than—(*sees* FRANK *and* MILLICENT *enjoying an undertone conversation*) That young ape's amusing her with his confounded satirical trash. He doesn't *really* care for her, I'll take my oath. And that charming little Clara Mayfield's breaking her heart at— (*turning, sees* LAMB *patiently waiting, with his glass out*) I beg your pardon. (*fills* LAMB'S *glass*) Miss Mayfield, you're only pretending to eat.

CLA. Oh, I can assure you I'm doing wonders.

POL. If you won't eat, drink a little champagne. Come!

CLA. No; I'm vulgar enough to admit that I prefer beer.

POL. Vulgar! Ha! ha! You amuse me. If you knew the great folks—I was almost saying the crowned heads—who patronise "Pale Ale," you'd be surprised. (*pours her out some; aside*) Sensible girl, this! (*they talk aside*)

MIL. (*to* FRANK) Ah, you—you don't mean half you say.

FRA. On the contrary, I mean a thousand times *more*. I can't express a millionth part of what I feel.

MIL. (*sighs*) Ah, all you men say the same.

POL. What do you think of that? Now, just the least

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little taste of the lobster salad. You haven't touched the fowl. Come, *I* made it. Don't refuse.

CLA. You made it. Why, Mr. Pollard, you're quite an universal genius.

FRA. (*overhearing*) Who's that, who's a universal genius? I've always heard a genius is next to a fool. Eh, Pollard?

POL. (*looking at him, then indicating that* MILLICENT *is between them*) Not always—sometimes it's—a—next *but one.* (*to* CLARA, *alluding to what she has on her plate*) That's not so bad, is it?

CLA. Lovely.

FRA. (*annoyed*) Lovely applied to lobster. Ha! ha! that's *rich.*

LAMB. (*who has been and is eating it*) Not rich a bit. I feel I could go on at it for ever.

MIL. That's right. I'm sure *I* can't bear anything *rich.* Can *you?* (*to* FRANK)

FRA. I'm afraid I adore something—I mean some*body*—rich at this moment. The more fool I. (*sighs*)

MIL. (*aside; sighs*) How he loves me!

MISS H. (*aside*) I never was treated with such perfect indifference in my life. Nobody asks me to have anything; nobody pays me the least attention. Miss Tremaine's so taken up with her new admirer that she ignores *me.* That Pollard devotes himself to that most *provincial* young person; and as for Mr. Lamb, beyond an evident determination to make himself ill, his conduct is utterly colourless. I —a—I want some more champagne. Here! *Man!* (*to* JOE)

JOE. Aye, aye, ma'am.

MISS H. (*mysteriously; in a half whisper*) The day is so remarkably oppressive that——

JOE. (*with a wink at her*) All right. (*pours out some champagne*) Mums the word.

MISS H. *Mum,* is it! Took it for *Moet.* (*aside*) A very intelligent person.

LAMB. Doing pretty well, Miss Stuffin?

MISS H. Huffin, sir!

MIL. (*to* FRANK) My word once given is never recalled.

FRA. But you haven't positively given it yet.

MIL. Could I have said so much if I had intended to say nothing more?

POL. (*aside, having observed them*) They're coming it pretty strong over there. How people can actually spoon in public! He's taken her from me, and under my very nose. (*aloud*) He—hem!

(MILLICENT *starts*; *so does* LAMB, *who chokes in his glass, but recovers*)

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MISS H. (*aside*) What a bear that brewer is!

POL. Capital selection—this spot. D'ye know there's a romantic history attached to this place?

CLA. Is there? Oh, *do* tell us about it.

MIL. Oh, yes, *do*. Romance is my weakness.

MISS H. *And* mine.

MIL. Is it a story of disappointed love?

MISS H. Or of——

POL. Why, yes, it is. It appears that ever so many years back——

LAMB. (*quietly*) Pollard!

POL. Yes.

LAMB. Don't make it too *many* years back.

POL. I won't. It appears that a certain lady had a mad admirer, who followed her about—like the fond fool he was!—getting nothing but snubs for his pains.

MIL. Poor fellow!

FRA. Serve him right.

LAMB. Chai-ar! Chai-ar!

POL. One day, walking on the brink of the river here, the lady expressed great admiration for a certain wild flower which grew on the side of the Mill Torr there.

CLA. I can guess the end—can't everybody? The lady dared him to——

POL. Just so. The utter disregard for the feelings and safety of man permeates the entire gentler sex. You see how readily another woman jumps to the right conclusion.

MIL. Monstrous assertion! Thank goodness, we're not *all* alike.

FRA. (*sneering*) Mr. Pollard's sentiments are such as one might expect.

MISS H. (*aside*) Malt and hops! Malt and hops!

POL. "Prove the depth of your affection," disdainfully exclaimed the haughty damsel—"Climb, and get me yonder flower."

LAMB. And *did* he prove the depth of his affection?

POL. (*seriously*) He proved the depth of yonder water. For, in grasping the prize, his foot slipped—he fell into the stream—(which just under the rock is terribly deep)—and he was drowned. (*slight pause*)

LAMB. Not the most exhilarating anecdote I *ever* heard.

MIL. You might have spared us this skeleton at the banquet.

FRA. Not at all. The lady wished to test the fellow's courage.

CLA. (*maliciously*) More probably wanted to be rid of him.

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POL. Courage and foolhardiness are first cousins, I presume. No doubt he was well rid of such a heartless person.

MIL. That kind of chivalry has gone out, though; young men don't risk their lives for their lady-loves now-a-days. (*rises; clear up things*)

POL. Not to gratify their foolish whims, no doubt. I dare say we're quite as brave as—as there's any necessity to be.

MIL. For instance, if *I* were to express a wish to possess that small blue flower which I see over there, growing on the very ledge of the— –

POL. (*rises*) You wouldn't get it.

MIL. (*aside to him; down,* R. C.) Peter Pollard, you're a good swimmer, you have said. (FRANK *and* LAMB *go up to look at the flower off,* L., CLARA *listens to the dialogue*)

POL. Swimmer! A downright duck.

MIL. And are an adept at every manly and athletic sport. Strong as a lion.

POL. Quite a second-hand Samson, I believe.

MIL. (*imperiously; comes,* R.) Mr. Pollard, it is our command that you at once procure for us that pretty blue bunch.

CLA. (*aside*) Is the woman out of her mind?

MIL. They say history repeats itself; let us have a modern edition of this legend of Mill Torr. Come.

CLA. (*bitterly*) With the same termination.

POL. Were I possessed of a plurality of necks I wouldn't mind jeopardising *one* of them in order to cause a little wholesome excitement. Having, however, only the regulation allowance, and not being paid for its risk at the same rate as Blondin, I must beg to reply that, if you are anxious to possess those flowers, you *will*—as far as *I* am concerned—have to wait till you get them. (*crosses*)

(MILLICENT *turns up*)

FRA. (*down*) Why there's no credit in climbing *that*;—any *muff* could do it. *I'll* get them for you.

CLA. Frank! (*stops confused*)

LAMB. (*comes down; aside*) I should like Frank to do something to distinguish himself, if it's only to shew up Pollard, who's been rather personal, I think, more than once. (*goes up*)

FRA. (*aside to* MILLICENT) You see Mr. Pollard evidently shrinks from a scratch or two. I am not the remarkable athletic creature *he* is reported to be, but I'll get you those flowers.

MIL. (*to dissuade him*) No!

FRA. (*mock heroically*) Or perish in the attempt! (*goes off,* L. H.)

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LAMB. Joe! Joe!

JOE. Your honour. (CLARA *and* MISS HUFFIN *look off*, L.)

LAMB. I'm uneasy. Come after Master Frank. If—if—(*uneasily*) it's only to see him shew them how to do it. (*aside*) Stupid, rash boy! I feel uncomfortable over this. (*looking off*) He's—he's going to do it.

(*Exit with* JOE)

POL. (*preparing his cigar coolly*) He's going to *try*.

CLA. (*aside*) He'll risk his neck, and for *such* an object. (*goes out quickly*, L.)

POL. Ah, and such a neck.

MIL. (*annoyed at the phlegmatic, unconcerned manner of* POLLARD, *tapping her foot*) Well?

POL. Well.

MIL. You—you don't seem the least alarmed, or even interested.

POL. Alarmed! He said any muff could do it, so I feel quite easy on *his* account.

MIL. You don't like him.

POL. (*quietly*) I *hate* him.

MIL. (*after a slight pause*) I *love* him.

POL. Very good. You've nobody but yourself to please.

MIL. You are a stone. *You* care for nobody.

POL. On the contrary. I *love* as deeply as——

MIL. As——

POL. As my betters. (*with a bow*)

MIL. I declare, you are too—too—(*a piercing shriek heard from* CLARA)—What's that? (*goes up and looks off*, L.) Oh! Mr. Pollard—Peter—look! The dear, foolish fellow has grasped a piece of brushwood, which is giving way, and—ah! (*hides her face*)

POL. (*looking also*) The mad fool, he'll be—No! just caught by the edge of the cliff. He seems rather stunned too. If he falls off—by Jove! (*with a sort of satisfaction*) Considering that any *muff* could do it, that particular article of female adornment has rather failed.

MIL. (*in an agony*) There is no one to help him but *you*. *You* must rescue him or he may be killed!

POL. Well, upon my soul, this is *too* much. Because this young braggart risks his neck, I'm to risk mine to save him. He's my rival, he's brought it upon himself, and I don't see it. (*a murmur heard from those who are off*)

MIL. (*in agony*) You think of your *own* life rather than——

POL. Rather than his—certainly I do, a good *deal* rather.

MIL. But not of *mine*. You say you cared for *me*——

POL. (*throws away his cigar*) You shall see, Milly.

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You shall have back your lover if *I* can restore him to you. (*looks off*) If the silly boy had seen half as much of mountain climbing as *I* have he wouldn't have trusted to—Ah! (*rushes off*, L. H.)

MIL. (*looking off*) It's *my* fault. I did it all. He'll be killed and every one will—no—Peter pushes them aside—the old man wringing his hands, and his servant helpless. Ah! that's well done. (*with pride*) How strong and brave he is! He has reached the ledge and—and—lifts him like a little child. Be careful! Be careful! Ah!—no. He's insensible!

POL. (*off*) Keep back, every one of you. Look to Mr. Lamb—he's overcome. I'll see to this silly fellow. (*enters, carrying the fainting form of* FRANK. MILLICENT *gets to* L. H.) There. (*places him down*) By Jove! Phew! I should say he must sleep deuced heavy to judge from his weight when stunned.

MIL. Oh, Frank, say you are not dead!

POL. Rubbish! He doesn't know if he is or not. Old Lamb wants more attention than this one; and as he's three people to see to him, and you're a little in the way here, suppose you hasten to the lodge and ask Jeffrys for a little brandy.

MIL. Oh yes, yes, but you will save him. I mean bring him round!

POL. Yes, if you'll bring me the brandy.

MIL. (*overcome with agitation*) Yes—yes. I don't know what I'm doing—I—Doesn't he look lovely with his eyes closed?

POL. (*impatiently*) They'll never open again if you don't look sharp.

MIL. Yes, yes. (*hurries off*, L. H.)

POL. A near touch this. Another minute or two, and—Hulloa! it's all right.

FRA. (*recovering*) Why—a—where—where—(*looks at* POLLARD) Pollard (*shaking himself together, and getting all right after a long breath*), you—you've saved my life!

POL. I regret to have to admit it.

FRA. But for you, I, foolhardy, conceited ass that I was, I should been dashed to pieces down the declivity. You risked your neck for mine.

POL. Like a fool.

FRA. Like a noble fellow. What can I do to shew my gratitude, at least to faintly shadow forth what I *would* do if I could?

POL. (*eyes him keenly*) Frank, speak to me the honest truth. You don't love—(*intensely*) LOVE, mind you, not *admire*—you

don't love with your whole heart and soul Millicent Tremaine.

FRA. *(looks at him earnestly, then falters)* Well a—you know—what a strange——

POL. You *don't* ! You *lie* if you say you do.

FRA. I *don't* lie, and I don't love her.

POL. I *do*. She *likes* me. She's smitten by *you*. She loves as *I* love—neither of us. *I'm* worthy of her—you're *not*, because your heart is really set upon your cousin. I've given you your life—give me *mine*. It's wrapt up in Millicent Tremaine—*(bugle heard without); then the "Post-horn Galop," piano, till end)* Hand me over the parcel.

FRA. Are you in earnest ?

POL. You know that a desire to help your father is also a strong inducement to your——

FRA. I'll admit it. I could not bear that he——

POL. *(grasping his hand)* *I'll* save him. He need never know. Don't have any leave-taking. I'll break the news to her. Travelling'll do you good. You *want* change. The coach starts from the George in two minutes. As regards your father, trust to *me* ; you know you *can*.

FRA. I hardly know what to say or do. Clara can't go without——

POL. I'll set you right there. She'll think the more of you for getting rid so bravely and abruptly of this ridiculous infatuation. They're coming. Now's your time, if you *meant* your words of gratitude just now.

FRA. *(enthusiastically)* I did and do. And however all may turn out, I will do as you direct, and that at once. *(with firmness.)* Good-bye ! *(wrings his hand and rushes off,* R.H.)

POL. He's done it. I knew the fine, noble, impulsive, generous, pig-headed young idiot would do it. *Now*, my lady, I'll shew you what beer *versus* bunkum means.

Enter LAMB *pale, supported by* JOE, *and* CLARA.

LAMB. Where is he ? Where's Frank ? Pollard, what's become of him ?

POL. He's all right. Well as ever he was in his life.

LAMB. You're a fine fellow ! A noble fellow. The very image of what I was at *your* age. *(shakes hands)*

CLA. (L. C.) But *is* Frank ? And—and that Miss Tremaine.

MIL. (L., *entering*) Here is *that* Miss Tremaine as you call her, Miss Mayfield. But *(crosses)* where is poor Mr. Frank ?

POL. Gone.

MIL. Gone !

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POL. Yes, gone to town.

CLA. (L.) What! Mr. Pollard's evidently——

POL. (C.) But he left a message, Miss Tremaine.

MIL. (L. C., *biting her lip*) Indeed!

POL. For your private ear——

LAMB. (R. C.) No, hang it, out with it. No *privateers*. Eh, Joe?

JOE. (R.) No, no. Shew your colours, shew your colours.

POL. (C.) Very good. He told me that he was at length fully alive to his false position in running about like a poodle after a lady in so superior a position to himself, and as her last exhibition of whimsical eccentricity had fully convinced him of the mistake he had made, and of her disregard for the adoration of a—hem!—of a devoted admirer, he begged to say "farewell," and he is at this moment taking his seat on the coach bound for that distant region where there is balm for the wounded spirit, consolation for the scared bosom, and above all, apartments suited to the capabilities of every variety of pocket.

CLA. (*aside, delighted*) He's found her out—I knew he would. I love him more than ever!

(*the coach bugle louder*)

LAMB. (*up* R.) There's the coach. He's—he's on it. He waves his hand! I'm in the clouds! I don't know whether I'm glad—or whether I'm sad—or whether I'm *mad*—or——

POL. Milly, *don't* give way.*

(* RAVENBILL *has entered,* L.; *he advances to support* MILLICENT POLLARD *pushes him violently aside, and catches her rapturously in his arms* (*she swooning*). RAVENBILL *is swung against* JOE, *who swings him against* LAMB. LAMB *knocks him backwards into* JOE'S *pie.* JOE, *with a roar of horror, rushes to pull him forth as the Act Drop descends*)

END OF ACT II.

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ACT III.

SCENE.—Same as Act I.

Enter CLARA, D. R. 2 E.

CLA. Not a line from Frank. No explanation from him of his strange conduct. I wonder if *she* has heard from him? No, I am sure she hasn't. The first person he would have written to would have been his father, and even *he* has not—(*enter* RAVENBILL, D. F.) This dreadful man, again!

RAV. (R. C.) Don't go, Clara. I want to speak to you and I *will* speak to you. Don't frown, Clara, and don't look annoyed because I call you by your Christian *name*, Clara, because I'm wound up to that condition that I'm desperate, and when I'm desperate I'm fixed and firm. The Rock of Gibraltar is a quivering jelly compared to me. Sit down. (CLARA *sits down* L. C., *with a sigh of resignation*) I don't address you as a doll of a girl with no brains in her head; you've got sound common sense, and to that I appeal. Your uncle, Mr. Lamb's, up a tree—in a hole.

CLA. I don't see how he can be both at the same time.

RAV. I want to be his friend—I will be. I *am* on one condition. There must be no more of this fast and loose conduct. I flatter myself my constant attentions have made the requisite impression, *and* should there have been any lingering regard for your boy-admirer (who is no longer a boy and doesn't admire you) why—a—in short, I mean to have an answer, Clara Mayfield, before I leave this room.

CLA. You would scarcely like to marry a person who could not love you.

RAV. *Anybody* could love me—if they tried.

CLA. Mr. Ravenbill, you mustn't ask me.

RAV. (*seriously*) I don't *ask*, Clara. I'm in a position to order, to *command*.

CLA. And I'm in a position to refuse. (*rises*)

RAV. (*rises*) No, you're not, not if you've any natural feeling for your best friend; think what you owe *him*.

CLA. You mean what he owes *you*.

RAV. See how unselfish I am. I am content to lose *all*, if I gain *you*. I hate a Shylock.

Enter LAMB, D. F.

CLA. I love my uncle dearly, and I am almost heart-broken, a ou know, at the cruel conduct of—

RAV. (*quickly*) Just so. I'm *never* cruel. I never killed a

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fly. I discharged a clerk for whipping his grandson, and have been on the very *verge* of subscribing to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals any time these ten years. Come, now, you'll make me a happy man.

LAMB. (C.) Hem! I forbid the banns.

RAV. (R., *sneering*) *You*, eh?

LAMB. Yes. As the lady's nearest living relative you can take the final answer from *me*. It's a NO, N O. Capital letters. (*turns to* CLARA, *takes her hand*)

RAV. Miss Mayfield has not referred me to you.

CLA. (L., *aside to* LAMB) Oh, uncle dear, how good and kind you always are—and I'm sure Mr. Ravenbill has some horrible claim upon you. Why am I so helpless to assist you? I could *hate* myself for my utter uselessness.

LAMB. Nonsense, my pretty, nonsense. (*to* RAVENBILL) Why, how could you suppose a young, fresh, artless girl like this could care for a—a—crab-apple like *you*?

RAV. Take care, sir; "crab-apple's" actionable.

LAMB. Why, you'd never feel *sure* of the poor young bird you'd caged.

RAV. (*aside*) I'll make sure of the *old* bird, though, and that before the day's out. (*to him*) Mr. Lamb, I accept your decision. Miss Mayfield, you will regret this. When you see the result of your conduct don't blame *me*. Don't call it *revenge*, because it isn't; it's ruin—complete ruin—but he's brought it upon *himself*—a—WITH your assistance.

LAMB. I'm prepared for the worst, sir. You see, my dear, the kind of man I wouldn't let you marry. Look at him. (RAVENBILL *uneasy*) Ha! ha! and that's the fellow wouldn't kill a fly. Oh, no; what a dear, soft-hearted old spider it is, to be sure.

RAV. (*fuming*) Mr. Lamb—you're insulting, sir.

LAMB. (*chuckling*) Ha, ha! I *mean* to be.

RAV. Your grey hairs and the presence of your niece protect——

LAMB. Clara, my dear, go to my room and bring me the newspaper—a—*presently*.

CLA. Yes, uncle dear, but for *my* sake——

LAMB. Do what I ask you. (*exit* CLARA, L.) Now, sir, we are alone. I thought it better to send the lady away as I fancied *you* were going to be abusive.

RAV. Eh?

LAMB. And I was *sure I* was. When you offer my niece your hand you insult her—insult *me*. That girl can trace her lineage back to a date that the noblest in the land would be proud of. Though she's the penniless niece of a poor broken down old sailor (who lies helpless in your hands, and Heaven

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knows how low that is!) she is as far above such a man as *you* are as——

RAV. (*excited and enraged*) Take care, sir, take care, you *may* go *too* far.

LAMB. (*opening door*) *You can't.* Leave my house.

RAV. (*turning on him*) Leave your *house!* (*fiercely*) I'll leave you nothing! I'll sell you up root and branch! I'll turn you and your niece into the——

LAMB. You'll do *what!* (*as they are almost about to fly at each other,* POLLARD *enters abruptly,* D. F.)

POL. (*pushing aside* RAVENBILL *instinctively*) Hulloa! Lift your hand against Mr. Lamb, a *gentleman!*

RAV. Oh, I'm sick of this eternal brag of being *gentlemen* and *ladies.* Pay your way, that's *my* notion of a gentleman.

POL. (*quietly*) Not a bit of it—it's pay *your* way—60 per cent. That's your notion of a gentleman.

RAV. It's false. I never charged 60 per cent. in my life. (*aside*) Eighty's *my* figure.

POL. (C.) Get out.

RAV. Are you aware——

POL. I *am.* Get out.

RAV. But in a short time I shall be master of——

POL. I shall not be master of *myself* if you don't go in a moment. I was never known to say "Get out" *three* times without there ensuing unpleasant, even *painful* results. (*comes,* L.)

RAV. (*overwhelmed with rage*) I—I—(*goes up* C.) Hah! (*dashes out,* D. F.)

LAMB. (*who has been fuming,* R.) What do you mean by interfering, sir? D'ye think I can't take care of *myself?* In another moment I'd have *smashed* him, sir—simply smashed him. Can't say I'm obliged to you,

POL. (*aside*) Moral—never interfere in a row. The philanthropist who interposes during the unseemly *al fresco* differences of man and wife even, usually retires with a pair of black eyes, the joint contribution of the couple.

Enter JOE, D. F.

JOE. Here's a letter.

LAMB. (*delighted*) From Frank—it's from Frank!

POL. (*aside*) *Is* it!

LAMB. I'm all of a tremble—I—(*opens the letter*) No, it's not from Frank. Why, what's *this!* Joe! Joe! (*faintly*) it's money—notes! Oh, it can't be for *me.*

POL. (L., *hastily*) Oh, yes, it is. I happen to know that—(*pulls himself together*)

LAMB. (C.) Eh?

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POL. Of course, there's only *one* Christopher Lamb, Esq., R.N.

LAMB. Yes, but—what's this? (*reads*) "From a friend, who has heard of Mr. Lamb's temporary embarrassments."

JOE. Long life to him whoever he is!

POL. Hear, hear!

LAMB. It's some mistake. Who on earth?—friend!. I *have* none. It can't be Dick Stannard—*he* cut me dead last time we met. Ha! ha! I'd once done him a service, so it wasn't remarkable. There was Charley Britton, of the 5th; *he* married an heiress——

POL. Just so—a millionairess. I know him. Wife allows him two pounds a week, on which he starves genteelly in a garret in Mayfair, dines daily at a ham and beef shop in Drury Lane, and takes a light dessert off his toothpick in Pall Mall afterwards.

LAMB. (*blankly*) Ah, then it can't be Charles.

JOE. It don't matter who it is. Ravenbill won't ask. It's almost too good news to be true, your honour, and whosomever the friend may be——

LAMB. (*with fervour*) May Heaven bless him! (*wipes his eyes, then blows his nose violently*)

POL. It would delight your son to know it.

LAMB. Don't mention him. He has left me without a word. Left one who loved him, too, poor girl!

POL. *She'll* get over it.

LAMB. Not a bit. She'll break her heart.

POL. Do you mean it?

LAMB. I don't like to say it, but—but Frank's behaved *badly*. I didn't think he would. He's behaved like a scoundrel! (*sits*)

POL. (*aside*) Confound it! No, I—I can afford to be generous as I've got rid of him. (*to* LAMB) Your son's *no* scoundrel, and has acted with great magnanimity.

JOE. (R.) Ha, ha! Mag—*what?*

POL. (L.) Mr. Lamb, you permit your servant an amount of freedom which——

LAMB. Joe Grill, sir, is not only my servant, but my friend. We are both old sailors, and he has stuck to me like—like——

JOE. Like a barnacle.

POL. Precisely. But you are both in error about Frank.

JOE. He left his father to ruin, when he might have——

POL. (*excitedly*) I won't hear him thus maligned. Your son sacrificed his feelings and his future to save you.

LAMB. Eh?

POL. And the money you have just received is the result.

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LAMB. (*after a look of surprise at* POLLARD, *aside to* JOE) He speaks the truth, Joe. He's not one to lie; there's no falsehood in that face.

JOE. Not a bit. It's as open as the cap'n's gig.

LAMB. (*aside*) I see it!—I see it all! (*rises*) So he gave up Clara, gave up the girl he loved from a child—TEMPTED, BRIBED, BOUGHT by the money of that bewitched Millicent Tremaine. From a "friend," eh? A pretty *friend!* But I wouldn't purchase *my* future at the price of his happiness and *hers*, not for a——(*about to tear the paper and notes*)

JOE. What are you doing? (*takes them*) Let me play "purser," if you please.

LAMB. What—what could she see in him?

POL. Blood.

LAMB. Well, we've all got *that.*

POL. Not at all. *I* haven't *any.*

LAMB. (*seriously*) *Haven't* you, though?

POL. *I* never had a grandfather.

LAMB. Hadn't you? Then allow me to remark that your *grandmother* must have been a very extraordinary woman. Joe, did *you* have a grandfather?

JOE. Two on 'em. One was a ship's chandler at Shields, reg'lar miser and dreadful rich; t'other drunk himself into a h'early grave at the h'age of seventy-nine.

POL. In your son she saw a handsome young fellow, with no money, no profession, no prospects; *but* one of an old and respected family, a family that has never known dishonour. Millicent Tremaine comes of a proud race, but your son comes of a race *as* proud. In *her* romantic eyes the cloud under which you have been so long lends an additional attraction to—What's the matter? (LAMB *through this speech has been fidgetty and agitated, and* JOE GRILL *has turned his face aside*)

LAMB. Nothing! Nothing!

POL. (*aside*) I've put my foot in it *again*, I suppose.

LAMB. (*aside to* JOE) You hear him, Joe! No good ever yet came of dec p'tion. I meant it for the best, but I did wrong, Joe, I did wrong.

JOE You did right, you *always* do right, when you takes my advice. (*enter* MILLICENT, D. F., *followed by* MISS HUFFIN)

MIL. May I come in?

LAMB. (R. C., *uncomfortable and on his dignity*) Certainly, madam, I——

MIL. (*aside*) Madam!

MISS H. (C., *aside*) The naval old gentleman's put out. Naval old gentlemen always bring put out.

MIL. (L. C.) I am afraid I'm intruding but——

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POL. Not at all. I was——

MIL. (*drawing herself up*) Sir !

POL. Really. I——(*turns to* MISS HUFFIN)

MISS H. (*drawing herself up*) Sir ! (*crosses to* LAMB, R., *with whom she talks*)

POL. (*aside to* MILLICENT) I have called three times at the Hall, and found you out.

MIL. Excuse me, sir, I've found *you* out.

POL. (C., *aside*) Can she possibly have— —

MIL. (L.) The delight with which you announced your rival's abrupt departure shewed me your true nature. You imagined the coast was clear, that you had only to persevere with your odious attentions to induce me to eventually—but you were mistaken. There is some mystery which I will penetrate, and understand if there wasn't another man in the universe, I'd die a spinster rather than marry a brewer. (*sits*)

LAMB. (*aside to* JOE) Joe, I wish you'd take this old woman out and lose her. She's making love to me. I shall insult her in a moment. I shall call her names if she goes on.

MISS H. There's something on your mind, Mr. Lamb, confess it. You are not in your usual spirits. At your time of life you need a companion who——

LAMB. *My* time of life ! Confound it, madam, I'm not as old as *you*.

MISS H. Oh ! (*aside*) Ill-mannered old Grampus ! (*retires up*)

POL. Very good—my mind's made up. I shall sell my shooting box, and start for Norway next week.

MIL. Norway !

POL. You have heard of the locality. It's a wild place ; a lonesome place.

MIL. Not at all ; you'll find plenty of congenial society amongst your fellow bears.

POL. There I shall forget the past, and devote myself to catching seals, sharks, whales——

MIL. *Colds*.

POL. You are sarcastic—not *original*, but sarcastic. Ha ! ha !

MIL. (*rises*) When you *do* catch a seal pray send it to me, and I'll make a muff of it.

POL. You've made a muff of *me*, ma'am ; but when I am in a distant clime—in the midst of snow-drifts, icebergs, cod-liver oil, and other fatal surroundings—possibly you may —especially in the winter—*you may* feel disposed to heave a sigh of regret—aye, even shed a remorseful tear over one

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whose only fault was that he was a brewer, and loved, *not* wisely, but too well. (*turns aside*)

MIL. (*after slight pause*) Very well, Mr. Pollard, you're master of your own actions. (*aside*) I don't like his going to Norway for *all* that. (*turns up*)

POL. Mr. Grill, a word.

(JOE *goes to* POLLARD)

LAMB. (*uneasily; aside to* JOE) Joe—Joe Grill, don't desert me. Don't leave me alone with these two women—Joe—— (JOE, *who has been listening to* POLLARD *speaking in an undertone, only shakes his head, and goes out with* POLLARD, D. F. LAMB, *in a weak, appealing voice*) *Joe!* (*aside*) He's gone!

MIL. (*comes, c.*) I am so pleased they have left. I wished to speak to you alone. Miss Huffin, of course——

LAMB. (R.C.) Of course—she's nobody!

(MISS HUFFIN *sniffs and goes up*)

MIL. Mr. Lamb, I am breaking my heart. You have not heard from——

LAMB. Not a line. (*severely*) Have *you?*

MIL. Not one word.

LAMB. You're quite *sure?*

MIL. (*offended*) Do you doubt my word, sir?

LAMB. I don't know. The world's a mass of deception, and—and I'm a deceiver *myself!*

MISS H. (*up* R., *aside*) The old reprobate—to *own* it, too!

LAMB. Frank, too—he is a pretender—an impostor—a——

MIL. (*firing up*) He is nothing of the kind. He's a noble, generous young gentleman, and you ought to blush to use such words.

MISS H. (*aside*) Catch *him* blushing—a hardened old rover!

LAMB. It seems he has no lack of defenders, anyhow. It was only just now that Mr. Pollard——

MIL. (*excited*) Did *he* dare to malign him—behind his back, too! If he *did* I'll—I'll get somebody to call him out—I'll——

LAMB. Rubbish! he was praising him—said he was a noble fellow, and all that, and that he'd given up everything to save *me*.

MIL. (*melting*) *Did he*, though—*did* he? Bless him for that! I knew Peter was too much of a man to vilify anyone *I* cared for.

LAMB. (*with intensity*) You played your cards *well*, madam. You laid your little plot with wondrous skill; but you reckoned without your host. You *knew* that you were dealing with those who were little better than beggars, and you

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fell back upon your wretched money to befriend you. He—*he* was weak enough—*wicked* enough—to sell his honour and his self-respect to save *me*! Save ME, forsooth! As if *I* would accept one shilling of his wretched bribe! Joe! Joe Grill! Come here! come here! (*excitedly goes to door*)

MIL. I'm in the clouds; his brain must be affected. I——

LAMB. (*to* JOE, *who enters.* POLLARD *comes to door and pauses at the entrance*) Joe, give me that money—those notes!

JOE. But what are you going——

LAMB. (*fiercely, excited*) Give it me, I tell you. (*takes it from* JOE) There—there, Miss Millicent Tremaine—take it back—count it—count it, and see that it's correct—that it's just precisely as you sent it!

MIL. (*with the money in her hand, gazing in amazement*) Mr.—Mr. Lamb.

LAMB. Madam?

MIL. *I* never sent you this money; I know nothing whatever about it; it doesn't belong to *me*.

LAMB. It doesn't belong to *me*, and I won't have it.

JOE. If there's to be any argeyment about it I don't care if *I*——

LAMB. (*up*) Silence, Joe! That money came to me but a short time back; it was sent me "from a friend"—so said the enclosure. It accounts for Frank's disappearance; he has been bribed to—— (MISS HUFFIN *comes to* L. H.)

MIL. (*seeing with horror the fact*) It's—it's that *Peter!* (POLLARD *bolts hastily at back*)

LAMB. What Peter?

JOE. *Blue* Peter?

LAMB. Silence, Joe.

MIL. Miss Huffin, it's that deep, designing Pollard. (*has got round to* L.)

MISS H. What can you expect from a man who allows his name to be swung on signboards? (*aside*) Though I *will* say when bottled its exhilarating, *very* exhilarating.

MIL. It's a conspiracy, Mr. Lamb. Mr. Pollard has descended to the mean expedient you have imagined to be mine. Few women would care to *buy* a husband.

LAMB. (*aside*) No, many of 'em are contented with *selling* them.

MIL. But I am not beaten. I will *find* Frank, generous, noble fellow! He has sacrificed his feelings to save *you*. More than ever do I admire him, now that I see the reason of his abrupt disappearance. It's *birth*, lineage, blood, Mr. Lamb—"*Noblesse oblige*," you know, and——

LAMB. Stop! Stop! Miss Tremaine. (*aside*) Joe, stand by me.

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JOE. (R.) Ay, ay, your honour.

LAMB. (R. C.) It's time the truth was told, Joe, for it's my last chance. Miss Tremaine, you come of an old, a *very* old family. You have imagined Frank to be in love with you—nothing of the kind—his heart was pre-engaged. You are content to overlook poverty, and in the possession of great wealth to accept the addresses of a well-born though poor admirer. He—he is *not* well born.

MIL. (C.) Mr. Lamb!

LAMB. The secret has been locked up in the chest—the *sea*-chest, I may say, of two old sailors, Joe and me—these five-and-twenty years—eh? (*to* JOE)

JOE. Come next Febbry.

LAMB. Right. Frank is *no* gentleman by *birth*. No son of mine, though I undertook to bring him up, for I had prospects then and hope filled my heart if not my pockets. His father was the lowest of the low; his mother—there, there, poor girl, she's dead this many a year; but if you talk of *family*, let me tell you, Millicent Tremaine, there's not a labouring lad for miles around who wouldn't deem it a disgrace to own such parentage as Frank's. This would never have been spoken by my lips or by Joe's here hadn't it have been for your blind infatuation; as it is only right that he—that *you*—should not be placed in a false position. He has never known this—never *shall* know it, but *you*—you—(*turns and sees* FRANK, *who has entered at the back at the beginning of the speech, standing pale and overcome.* LAMB *grasps* JOE'S *hand who almost supports him.* MILLICENT *is agitated. A pause*)

MIL. (*in a low voice*) Mr. Lamb, you have astonished me—shocked me, but you are right in telling me the facts. I will not say how deeply, how *keenly* your words have pained me, nor——

FRA. (*advancing*) Miss Tremaine—Milly.

MIL. (*involuntarily drawing from him*) No. No! If you *please*, don't. (*turns to* L.)

FRA. (*after a long look at her*) I *won't*.

(*turns aside hurt, and yet proud*)

LAMB. (*grasping his hand*) Frank, Frank, you have come back—you'll never leave me.

FRANK. Oh, sir, *best* friend, why, *why* have I never been told this before (*grasping his hand*)

LAMB. But what brought you back, Frank?

FRA. In the loneliness of that great London, where I didn't know a soul, remorseful thoughts came upon me hard and fast. Thoughts of Clara—whom I had mistrusted;

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thoughts of my blind acceptance of the terms forced upon me by——Clara!

(CLARA *has entered*)

CLA. Yes, Frank dear.

FRA. You have heard what my father—what has been said —you have heard who and what I am? (*enter* POLLARD)

CLA. Yes, Frank. (*crosses*)

FRA. And are ashamed that you ever——

CLA. That I ever gave you cause for unhappiness. I think no more and no less of a man for his parentage. A man is what he makes *himself*.

POL. Quite right. My *father* made himself.

LAMB. (*aside*) Yes; he *said* he'd never had a grandfather.

MISS H. Millicent, we had better go home. Everything's all wrong, and——

MIL. No, on the contrary, everything's all *right*. The clear rays of truth have pierced the cloud that has enveloped me so long;—I have awoke from my feverish dream, and see my own folly now in its true light. (*to* MISS HUFFIN) *You* fed the foolish fancy I should have striven to overcome; *you* have been for so long dinning into my ears *birth*, *birth*; it should have been *worth*, *worth*. (*abruptly*) Shouldn't it, Peter?

POL. (R.C.; *half knocking over a chair in his surprise*) *I* don't know. I—I——(*they converse*)

Enter RAVENBILL, D.F.

LAMB. Joe—Joe, I'm rather—rather——

JOE. So am I. How about Ravenbill?

RAV. Just so. How about Ravenbill? Hulloa! (*sees* FRANK *with* CLARA)

MIL. (*to* POLLARD) Say what *I* should say for me.

POL. Frank, (FRANK *takes his hand*; *aside*) you're well out of *that*. It was only a passing fancy. Clara Mayfield loves you—you love Clara Mayfield. If you like to come and manage my brewery there's six hundred a year for you and my best thanks for your acceptance of the post.

FRA. (*grasping his hand again*) Pollard, you're a noble fellow!

POL. I am—I am; I know it.

RAV. (*who has been talking to* JOE, R.) But I'm not to be humbugged. I'll shew you what it is to——

POL. So will *I—to-morrow!* (*turns to* MILLICENT)

RAV. (*aside*) Somebody's going to pay me. But, Clara, *you* won't——

JOE. There's your *hat*. (*hands it to him*) Take a fool's advice—*vanish*.

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RAV. (*white with rage*) It's all very well, I'll——

JOE. Your humbereller. (*hands it to him; with a withering look round* RAVENBILL *dashes out*, D. F.)

MIL. (*to* POLLARD) And you won't go to Norway.

POL. Norway! I'll see Norway—no; on second thoughts I *won't* see Norway.

LAMB. (R. C.) Joe!

JOE. (R.) Your honour.

LAMB. Safe in port at last, shipmate.

JOE. Aye, aye, sir, port it is.

POL. Free from disasters and tempestuous gales.

CLA. That's if *your* favour ng breath but fill our sails,
All adverse winds and currents are as naught.

MIL. If your kind hands but make all trim and taut,
The sunshine of your smiles dispels all fears,

LAMB. And gilds our poor Old Sailors' future years.

DISPOSITION OF CHARACTERS.

L.						R.
FRANK.	CLARA.	POLLARD.	MILLY.	LAMB.	MISS H.	JOE.

CURTAIN.

Finished reading on 30-1-21 / 31 [illegible]

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MUSIC OF BURLESQUES, OPERAS, & DRAMAS TO LOAN.

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Ditto, 8 band parts	7	6
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Brigand, score and 3 band parts ...	7	6
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Colleen Bawn, drama, 8 band parts...	10	0
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Dearer than Life, drama, 9 band pts	10	6
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Dolly, comic opera, p v	15	0
Ditto, 14 band parts	15	0
Don Cæsar de Bazan, drama, p v...	7	6
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Dumb Girl of Genoa, 5 band parts	5	0
Eddystone Elf, drama, 6 band parts	5	0
Ella Rosenberg, 5 band parts ...	5	0
Ernani, burl., 9 band parts ...	10	0
Esmeralda, burl., p v...	5	0
Ditto, 10 band parts	15	0
Ethiop, p. v.	5	0
Evil Eye, 6 band parts	5	0
Exile, 4 band parts	5	0
Fair Helen, opera, p v	7	6
Fair Rosamond's Bower, burl., p v	10	0
Fairyland, fairy play, p v	7	6
Farmer, opera, p v	2	6
Father and Son, drama, 5 band pts	5	0
Field of Cloth of Gold, burl., p v...	20	0
Field of Forty Footsteps, 7 b. pts	7	6
Flying Dutchman, 7 band parts ...	15	0
Fortunio, extrav., 10 band parts ...	15	0
Forty Thieves, drama (Sheridan) p v	5	0
Foundling of the Forest, p. v. ...	3	6
Ditto, 7 band parts	5	0
Fra Diavola, burl., p v	20	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Frankenstein, burl. 6 band parts ...	5	0
Funny Facts & Foolish Facts, p.v.	7	6
Ganem, vocal, 13 band parts ...	15	0
Geraldine, p v...	10	0
Gilderoy, 5 band parts	5	0
Golden Fleece, song, "I'm still ... flutter," p v	1	0
Good Night Signor Pantaloon, p. v.	20	0
Guy Mannering, drama, p v	10	0
Ditto, 6 band parts	7	6
Gwynneth Vaughan, p. v., 6 b. pts	5	0
Happy Man, p v....	3	6
Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Hamlet, grave-digger's song & acc.	1	0
Haunted Mill, p v	3	6
Haunted Tower comic opera, p v	5	0
Highland Lassie Ballet, 3 band pts.	3	0
High Life below Stairs, song, "All in a Livery"	1	0
House that Jack Built, full score	10	0
Hunter of the Alps, p. v.	3	6
Ill-treated Trovatore, p. v.....	15	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Illustrious Stranger, p. v.	5	0
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Invincibles, The, p v and parts....	5	0
Ivanhoe, burl. p. v.....	15	0
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Ixion, p.v.	20	0

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	s.	d.
Ixion, 9 band parts	15	0
Jack and the Beanstalk, p. v.	7	6
Jack Robinson and his Monkey, 6 band parts	5	0
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Joan of Arc, drama, 4 band parts..	5	0
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Lady Godiva, vocal, and 13 band pts.	20	0
Lady of the Lake, score, 5 b. p. ..	7	6
Lady of Lyons, [Byron] burl. p. v.	15	0
Ditto, 5 band parts	10	0
La Somnambula [Byron] burl.	15	0
Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0
Little Red Riding Hood, p. v.	7	6
Loan of a Lover, p. v.	5	0
Lodoiska, opera, p. v.	2	6
Lord Lovel, p. v.	7	6
Lost and Found, p. v.	5	0
Love by Lantern Light, p. v.	10	0
Love in a Village, p. v.	5	0
Love in a Village, 7 band parts ..	7	6
Love Laughs at Locksmiths, p. v.	3	6
Lucille, 6 band parts	5	0
Luke Somerton, 10 band parts	7	6
Luke the Labourer, 6 band parts..	2	6
Macbeth, tragedy, v. score & 8 b. pts.	19	0
Macbeth Travestie, p. v.	7	6
Ditto, 4 band parts	5	0
Madame Angot, p. v.	5	0
Maid and Magpie, drama, p. score...	3	6
Maid and Magpie, [Byron] burl. p.v.	20	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Maid of the Mill, opera, p. v.	2	6
Maid with Milking Pail (song)	1	0
Manager Strutt, 8 band parts	5	0
Mariner's Compass, drama, 15 b. p.	15	0
Marriage Figaro, C'tess pt, with bass	5	0
Mary Turner, p. v.	10	0
Ditto, 12 band parts	15	0
Masaniello, burl. p. v.	20	0
Masaniello, drama, 4 band parts	3	6
Mazeppa, 10 band parts	10	0
Medea, burl. full vocal score	10	0
Ditto, 8 band parts	10	0
Medea, burl., p. v.	10	0
Merchant of Venice (unpub. songs of)	2	0
Midas, p. v.	5	0
Mids. Night's Dream, [Bishop] p. v.	7	6
Military Billy Taylor, p. v.	15	0
Miller and Men, burl. p. v.	10	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	10	0
Miller and Men, drama, 5 band parts	7	6
Miller Out-witted, 3 band parts ...	2	6
Minerali, 3 band parts	2	6
Mischief-Making, vocal & 13 b. pts	10	0
Monsieur Jacques, p. v.	5	0
Mother Goose, harl., orig., p. v. ..	5	0
Motto, burl., p. v.	10	0
Motto, burl. 9 band parts	15	0
Mountaineers, p. v.	3	6
Ditto, 8 band parts	7	6
My Poll and my Partner Joe, burl. p. v.	15	0
Nobody's Child, 9 band parts	10	0
No Song, no Supper, opera, p. v. ...	5	0
No Song, no Supper, 4 band parts..	5	0
Nurseryrhymia, Fairy play, p. v...	5	0
	7	6

	s.	d.
Oak Chest, 10 band parts	10	0
Octoroon, 10 band parts	15	0
Of Age to-morrow, opera	3	6
Of Noble Birth, p. v.	7	6
Orpheus and Eurydice, [Brough] pv.	2	6
Padlock, The, opera, p. v.	3	6
Pas de Fascination, 8 band parts ...	5	0
Patient Penelope, p.v.	10	0
Perdita, burl. p. v.	20	0
Pills of Wisdom, p. v.	10	0
Pirates, opera, p.v.	5	0
Pizarro, p. v.	3	0
Ditto, 4 band parts	2	0
Prince Nicey Nosey, p. v.	7	6
Princess Charming, p. v.	20	0
Prize, The, opera, p. v.	2	6
Puss in Boots, [Planché] full score	7	6
Puss in Boots [Miss Keating] p. v.	5	0
Quaker, p. v.	5	0
Raymond and Agnes, 8 band parts	3	0
Review, p..v.	5	0
Robert Macaire, 4 band parts	2	6
Rob Roy, p. v.	5	0
Ditto, 8 band parts	5	0
Robin Hood, burl. p. v.	15	0
Ditto, 8 band parts	15	0
Robinson Crusoe, p. v. (evening ent.)	5	0
Robinson Crusoe [Byron], p.v. ..	7	6
Rosina, opera, p. v.	3	6
Sardanapalus, tragedy, entire music	7	6
School Bor-ed, p. v.	10	0
Sentinel, p. v.	5	0
Ditto, 14 band parts	15	0
Shepherd of Cournouilles, p. v.	3	6
Siege of Rochelle, p. v.	10	0
Sleeping Beauty [Miss Keating] p.v.	5	0
Sister's Sacrifice, 11 band parts	15	0
Sweethearts and Wives, p. v.	5	0
Swiss Swains, v. sc. opening chorus	5	0
Swiss Cottage, p. v.	5	6
Ditto, 6 band parts	7	6
Ten Tortured Tutors, p. v.	7	6
Tell with a Vengeance, p. v.	7	6
Ditto, 10 band parts	5	0
Therese, 5 band parts	7	6
Tower of Nesle, 9 band parts	7	6
Trombalcazar, p. v.	7	6
Trooper's Horn, full score	3	6
Turnpike Gate, opera, p. v.	7	6
Villikins and Dinah, p. v.	5	0
Vampire, 4 band parts	7	6
Watch and Wait, drama, 8 bnd prts	2	6
White Horse of Peppers, p. v.	2	6
Ditto, 6 band parts	2	6
William Tell [Brough] p. v.	3	0
White Cat [Keating] p. v.	5	0
White Cat [Planché] full score	5	0
Whittington and Cat, 7 band parts	5	0
Whittington, Junior, & his Cat	15	0
Welsh Girl, overture, full score	2	6
Wild Boy of Bohemia, 5 band parts	5	0
Willow Pattern Plate, 9 band parts	7	6
Waterman, p. v.	2	6
Who's the Heir, operetta, p. v.	4	6
Whostole the clock, opera bouffe, p.v.	7	6
Widows Bewitched, operetta p. v.	10	0
Windsor Cast. [Burnand] [Offenbach] burl. p.v.	2	6
Yellow Dwarf [Miss Keating] p. v.	3	6
Yew-tree Ruins, 6 band parts	7	6

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ON GUARD.

An entirely Original Comedy,

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

W. S. GILBERT,

(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society),

AUTHOR OF

Dulcamara, or the Little Duck and the Great Quack; Allow me to Explain; Highly Improbable; Harlequin Cock Robin and Jenny Wren; La Vivandière, or True to the Corps; The Merry Zingara, or The Tipsy Gipsy and the Pipsy Wipsy; No Cards (German Reed's); Robert the Devil, or the Nun, the Dun, and the Son of a Gun; The Pretty Druidess, or the Mother, the Maid, and the Mistletoe Bough; An Old Score; Ages Ago (German Reed's); The Princess, a Whimsical Allegory; The Gentleman in Black; Our Island Home (German Reed's); A Sensation Novel in Three Volumes (German Reed's); Randall's Thumb; Creatures of Impulse; Great Expectations; Palace of Truth; Pygmalion and Galatea; Thespis, or the Gods Grown Old; The Wicked World; &c., &c.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
PUBLISHER,
89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
PUBLISHERS,
38, EAST 14TH STREET.

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ON GUARD.

First produced at the Royal Court Theatre (under the management of Miss M. Litton), on Saturday, 28th October, 1872.

Characters.

DENIS GRANT (*an African Traveller*) ...	Mr. MARKBY.
CORNY KAVANAGH (*an Adventurer*) ...	Mr. BISHOP.
GUY WARRINGTON	Miss M. BRENNAN
GROUSE (*an Attorney*)	Mr. RIGHTON.
BABY BOODLE	Mr. CLAYTON.
DRUCE (*a Soldier's Servant*)	Mr. PARRY.
MRS. FITZOSBORNE (*a Widow*) ...	Miss M. OLIVER.
JESSIE BLAKE (*Guy Warrington's Cousin*)	Miss K. BISHOP.

ACT I.

GUARD MOUNTED.

EXTERIOR OF BEAUCLERE CASTLE. (*Moonlight*)

ACT II.

GUARD RELIEVED.

DECK OF SCHOONER YACHT, OFF CADIZ.

ACT III.

GUARD DISMISSED.

GUY WARRINGTON'S QUARTERS, GIBRALTAR.

Time occupied in Representation—Two Hours

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ON GUARD.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Exterior of Beauclere, an old Castle on Windermere, by Moonlight. Lake in the distance; the lower windows of the castle* (L.) *are lighted up; the voices of gentlemen dining are heard through half-opened windows.*

MRS. FITZOSBORNE *and* JESSIE *discovered in dinner dress, with "gauze clouds."*

MRS. FITZOSBORNE. Dear me, what a while those men waste over their wine!

JESSIE. Do you know, I often wonder what they talk about.

MRS. F. Ah! my dear, we had better not attempt to penetrate *that* mystery. Depend upon it, their conversation is not half as instructive as ours.

JESSIE. *We* generally talk about dress.

MRS. F. So do they—perhaps!

JESSIE. And horses, I daresay.

MRS. F. Yes; the women that wear the dresses, and the women that break the horses.

JESSIE. I daresay they are pulling us to pieces at this moment. I wish it was lady-like to listen! Why do ladies always retire after dinner, and leave the gentlemen alone?

MRS. F. My dear, during dinner many elevating and ennobling reflections occur to them, that we shouldn't understand, so we mercifully leave them that they may give utterance to their magnificent conceptions, or their teeming brains would burst.

JESSIE. Would Baby Boodle's teeming brain burst?

MRS. F. No, Baby Boodle's brain has plenty of turning room. Whenever he shakes his head, I always expect to hear it rattle!

JESSIE. How can you speak like that of a man you like?

MRS. F. Do you remember how you snubbed Guy at dinner?

JESSIE. Yes, I did it on purpose.

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MRS. F. How can you speak like that *to* a man you like? And that man going abroad to-night!

JESSIE. That's a very different thing. I love Guy very much, but he must be kept in order. Besides, you snub Baby Boodle!

MRS. F. Yes, but Baby Boodle don't know it. That's Baby Boodle's principal charm.

JESSIE. But Baby Boodle is in love with you.

MRS. F. (*sighing*) Yes, he would be. These heavy vacuous, good-natured, gentlemanly dragoons always are. I don't think I ever completely captivated a really clever man in my life. They all seem afraid of me. Look at Mr. Kavanagh—he's a clever, bright, shrewd fellow; I long to try conclusions with him, but he won't cross swords with me.

JESSIE. You're too clever for him, dear. You pay him back in his own coin, and he don't like it. He wants a rose from you, and you give him a thistle. Now that frightens clever men.

MRS. F. And fascinates donkeys. Perhaps your're right. At all events it points my moral—never snub a clever man, if you care two pins about him.

JESSIE. Ah, Mrs. Fitzosborne, when will you practise what you preach?

MRS. F. (*rises—crosses*, L.) When bishops black their own boots on Sunday. No, no, if you want to worry poor Guy, there are other ways of doing it.

JESSIE. By flirting, for instance.

MRS. F. (L. C.) Yes, by flirting, in moderation.

JESSIE. (*sits on stool*, R. C.) Do you know, between ourselves, I often think that with all my demureness, I have a hidden, secret, undeveloped tendency to flirt.

MRS. F. (*sits*, C.) Do you, indeed? My dear Jessie, in a quiet demure self-contained way, you're about the most irrepressible little flirt I know.

JESSIE. Oh, Mrs. Fitzosborne!

MRS. F. Look at Denis Grant, for instance.

JESSIE. Oh, I never flirted with Mr. Grant! During the week that he has been in England I have seen a great deal of his society, and I like him immensely—he's such a brave, rough, rugged, manly man—but flirt! why he was Guy's schoolfellow, and his very dearest friend! Oh, Mrs. Fitzosborne! flirt with Mr. Grant!

MRS. F. Ah, remember, Jessie, you are the first white woman he has seen for six years. Be merciful, dear. (*rise*)

JESSIE. (*rise*) Merciful! How ridiculous! Why, I've only chatted and laughed with him as I've done with fifty

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others, and you've thought nothing of it. The idea of *your* moralizing on the subject of flirtation! Is it because you've never done such a thing yourself?

MRS. F. No, Jessie, it's because I've done so much of it. I'm an old hand, and I can tell in half-an-hour how much a man can bear. When I embark on a flirtation I do so with my fingers on his pulse, and I stop when I find he's had as much as is good for him. And talking of people who have had as much as is good for them; here come the gentlemen at last!

Enter KAVANAGH *and* BOODLE *from dining room, through glass door.*

Well, Mr. Kavanagh, we've been expecting you very anxiously. What have you been talking about? Miss Blake says it's dress.

KAVAN. Yes, it was dress. Baby Boodle and I have been discussing a very nice point. Having regard to the conformation of Baby Boodle's face and figure, ought Baby Boodle to wear a tall hat with a narrow brim, and a long beard, or a low hat with a broad brim, and a short beard? That's the question, and we have agreed to refer it to you.

BOODLE. Nothing of the kind, Mrs. Fitz. We were talking about——

KAVAN. (*aside*) Hush!

BOODLE. Well, perhaps you're right.

MRS. F. Captain Boodle has devoted about forty years' study to the outside of his head. I think it would be only fair if he began to think about giving its inside a turn.

KAVAN. Oh, no—I can assure you that—the inside of Baby Boodle's head——

MRS. F. (*sharply*) I know what you are going to say—that the inside of Captain Boodle's head has had a *turn* already. Wasn't that it?

KAVAN. (*annoyed*) Yes—(*aside*) confound the woman! I wish she'd let me finish my sentences. (*aloud*) But Baby Boodle's anxiety about his personal appearance is a very good sign. He has an empty house to let, and he makes its exterior as attractive as possible in order that——

MRS. F. (*sharply*) In order that Reason may be tempted to come and take up her abode there. Wasn't that it, Mr. Kavanagh?

KAVAN. (*annoyed*) Yes—that is what I was going to say—I was going to add that——

MRS. F. That at present Reason don't see it; so he's going to lay it on thicker than ever. Wasn't that it, Mr. Kavanagh?

KAVAN. (*aside*) Oh! this woman is intolerable! (*crosses*, L.)

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BOODLE. I thay, Mrs. Fitz, I wish you'd let the inthide of my head alone. *I* do!

KAVAN. Bravo, Baby, so you do. (*slapping him on the shoulder*)

BOODLE. (*taking him aside confidentially*) I thay—look here—you won't mind my thpeaking plainly!

KAVAN. Not a bit—if you can!

BOODLE. Just tho; I alwayth like to come to the point.

KAVAN. My dear Baby, make this a rule—if there is ever any point in any of your remarks, come to it as soon as possible.

BOODLE. Just tho. Well, then, I wish you wouldn't call me Baby!

KAVAN. Why?

BOODLE. Becauthe I've only known you about three hourth, and ith a liberty. (*turning away*)

MRS. F. Come, Mr. Kavanagh, it's cowardly to attack poor Baby. Attack *me*, if you like; I'm always ready for a passage at arms. *I* can turn upon you with your own weapons.

KAVAN. Poor Boodle! he hasn't cultivated the art of *repartee*.

BOODLE. No, I haven't; but then, you thee, I am a well-bred man. (MRS. FITZOSBORNE *goes up*, L. C.) Whenever a person thays an impertinent thing, I conthole myself with the reflection that there's always a thundering good anthwer to it—if one only knew what it was! (*aside—crosses*, L.) I think thath one to me!

Exit BOODLE, L.—KAVANAGH *retires up*.

MRS. F. Isn't Mr. Kavanagh delightful? Do ask him to join the yachting party!

JESSIE. Shall I? But Captain Boodle!

MRS. F. Oh, Baby don't care. He and I understand one another. Now, do.

JESSIE. Mr. Kavanagh, I've a great favour to ask of you!

KAVAN. Indeed! Command me in anything.

MRS. F. (R.) In anything?

KAVAN. In anything that is within my poor powers. (*crosses*, C.)

MRS. F. Ah, that's a terrible come-down!

KAVAN. I don't pretend to universality, Mrs. Fitzosborne. Incomprehensible as it may appear to you, I am only mortal.

MRS. F. And do you really believe that it is necessary to assure society that you are *not immortal*?

KAVAN. (*gallantly*) I should if I were Mrs. Fitzosborne.

MRS. F. Oh! I know I don't look my age. Who does, now-a-days?

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JESSIE. Mr. Kavanagh, what a rude thing to have said.

MRS. F. Oh! Mr. Kavanagh didn't mean it rudely; did you, Mr. Kavanagh? You thought in your innocence that you were paying me a compliment. Now didn't you?

KAVAN. I had no intention to be severe. You deserve that I should be, Mrs. Fitzosborne—but when I fight with ladies, my weapon is the sword of mercy.

MRS. F. Which has no point! (*aside*) Oh, this man is delightful! He gives one such chances. (*crosses to* L.)

JESSIE. (*aside*) Oh! don't, you'll only make him angry.

MRS. F. Angry? Nonsense! he's delicious.

JESSIE. His temper is a very bad one, and he'll soon lose it.

MRS. F. My dear, if it's a very bad one, the sooner he loses it the better.

KAVAN. (*aside*) I can't stand this woman. (*aloud*) Miss Blake, you said you had a favour to ask of me. If you'll tell me what it is, I'll execute it if possible.

JESSIE. We sail for the Mediterranean in about six weeks. We shall have a spare berth on board, and we shall be so glad if you'll join us.

KAVAN. (*aside*) Whew! Poor Guy—poor little chap! Poor Jessie—poor little girl! I wonder if her uncle knows of this? (*aloud*) Really, you're very kind. I wish your uncle had told me earlier.

JESSIE. Oh! uncle doesn't know that I—I mean I have not told him, but I am sure he will be delighted to see you on board.

KAVAN. (*aside*) A spontaneous invitation of Jessie's. Poor Guy! Poor little chap!

MRS. F. (*crosses*, C.) I'm a very poor sailor, Mr. Kavanagh, and you'll only be troubled with me on very calm days, if that's any inducement.

KAVAN. An inducement! It decides me! Miss Blake, I'll go with pleasure. (*aside*) Boreas, blustering railer, do your worst! (*goes up*)

Enter GUY.

GUY. Druce!

Enter DRUCE.

DRUCE. Sir?

GUY. Is everything packed?

DRUCE. Yes, sir. The dog-cart is being put to, and Mr Warrington will drive you down to the station.

GUY. All right. *Exit* DRUCE.

Time is nearly up, Jessie!

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JESSIE. (*with indifference*) Is it?

MRS. F. When do you start, Mr. Guy?

GUY. We leave Beauclero in half-an-hour! It's awfully hard lines on a man. What's the use of garrisoning a great barren worthless rock, like Gibraltar? There's nothing whatever in it.

KAVAN. That is a defect that you are sent out to repair.

MRS. F. (*aside*) Come, Mr. Kavanagh, they've been quarrelling, and we must give them a chance of making it up before they part. (*takes his arm*)

JESSIE. Don't go, Mrs. Fitzosborne.

MRS. F. Yes, we must. We are going to rehearse a series of *repartees* that will astonish you when you hear them.

KAVAN. I don't meditate *my* good things, Mrs. Fitzosborne.

MRS. F. No, I'm sure you don't; quite sure. (KAVANAGH *bows, very much gratified*) If you did you wouldn't say them. Come along.

Exeunt MRS. FITZOSBORNE *and* KAVANAGH, R.

GUY. (*coming forward with some hesitation*) Jessie!

JESSIE. Well!

GUY. In half-an-hour I must go. I shan't see you again for——

JESSIE. Two months.

GUY. And then only for a week.

JESSIE. That's all? Dreadful, isn't it? (*sits*, R.)

GUY. It *is* dreadful; but it's still more dreadful to think how little you care about losing me.

JESSE. Oh, I'm sorry to lose you! You're so—so—so useful.

GUY. Useful! (*sits*)

JESSIE. Yes, it's pleasant to have someone always at one's beck and call, and now that you're going, it may be weeks before I'm able to replace you.

GUY. Replace me!

JESSIE, Yes. I really don't know what I shall do, unless Mr. Kavanagh——

GUY. Jessie, dear old Jessie, you don't mean that—you're saying it to tease me—Kavanagh's a snob, and you know it, dear; I've no fear of him.

JESSIE. Mr. Kavanagh takes great pains to say pleasant things to me, and if he has a good memory and is quick at executing commissions, he'll do very well. Besides, *he's* never rude to me.

GUY. Have I been rude?

JESSIE. Very!

GUY. What have I done?

JESSIE. All sorts of things.

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GUY. Tell me one thing.

JESSIE. I won't, I'm too generous.

GUY. Then you'll forgive me!

JESSIE. Oh, yes.

GUY. And, as soon as I arrive at Gibraltar, I'll—I'll send you over the greatest curiosity I can buy as a *souvenir*.

JESSIE. Oh, do!

GUY. What shall I send you? A pretty little green monkey?

JESSIE. A green monkey! Oh, that will be delightful. How kind of you; and whenever I look at it, I shall always think of you.

GUY. (*delighted at first*) You will! (*relapses*) Jessie, you're very cruel to me, the time is so short and—and it will be so long——

JESSIE. So short and so long.

GUY. So long before we meet again. Dear Jessie, I don't put it well, I know.

JESSIE. No, you don't.

GUY. I've never loved anybody but you. If I had been a devil of a fellow and done this sort of thing very often, I should know what to say and how to say it, and I shouldn't mean it; but I haven't and I don't—and I do—and—and——

JESSIE. You must practise with the garrison ladies at Gibraltar, and when you come back, dear, you'll know how to express yourself coherently.

GUY. Jessie, you're very angry with me for something, and I don't know what it is; but don't send me away without telling me that I am forgiven for what I've done—whatever it is. I love you more than I can ever love anybody else, and—and tell me, dear, that you forgive me. (JESSIE *is silent*) Jessie, (*sternly, but struggling with emotion*) I shall begin to think that you're doing this, in order that you may be able to say that you've seen a fellow make a fool of himself. (*rises*)

JESSIE. (*after a pause, suddenly bursts into tears, and throws her arms round his neck*) My dear old Guy, I love you with all my heart and soul; I like to tease you; I can't help teasing you, you do turn so red, but I love you as much as you could possibly wish me to. There, I've been a very naughty girl, but you know I don't mean half I say except when I say this, and then I mean it all, and more than I can put into words. There, I won't be cruel any more—and—and, oh, Guy, *isn't* it worth while quarrelling when we make it up again like this?

GUY. My darling Jessie, I must tell the governor of this before I go.

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JESSIE. He must have guessed it, dear.

GUY. Yes, but the thing must be done officially. (*crosses*, R.) It's an awkward thing to do; it puts a fellow in such a ridiculous light, but it must be done, I know! I'll put it off to the very last minute, and then he can't blow me up.

Enter DENIS, *crossing from* L. U. E. *down* R.

DENIS. (C.) Miss Blake—Mr. Warrington has been looking for you. May I take you to him? He's in the billiard room.

GUY. (*crosses*, C.) No—no, let her go alone, she knows her way. Stop here with me, I want to speak to you; and, I say, Jessie—(*taking her aside*) break the ground for me if you can. *Exit* JESSIE. At last we are alone together, for the first time for six years.

DENIS. (R. C.) Yes; when I saw you last, you wore a blouse, and a belt with a buckle as big as a blue book.

GUY. And you had just thrown out a pair of tails, and precious proud you were of *them!* and a pair of whiskers, and precious proud you were of *them!* I remember how I envied them, and wondered if I should ever have any like them. I don't believe I ever shall! Why, I haven't seen you since the day you left old Mortiboys!

DENIS. No. I've lived so long away from what people call the world. During the few years that intervened between my leaving school and sailing for Africa I only had one idea in my head—poor little Florence Ah! well, never mind *that;* and when she threw me over I couldn't stand it any longer, and I sailed for Africa the day she married.

GUY. (*rises*) Poor old Den! But you've got over that.

DENIS. Yes. (*crosses*, R.)

GUY. Quite?

DENIS. Quite!

GUY. True?

DENIS. Grip! (*they shake hands—then burst out laughing*)

GUY. By Jove! our old school words, when we pledged our honour—I had forgotten them; to think of that cropping up of itself as naturally as if we were still at old Mortiboy's. They always said of Den Grant that he never went from his grip, and you never did, old boy.

DENIS. I hope not.

GUY. Well, I was going to tell you something—a secret—but not now, I want it to be complete before I tell you—and—and—it isn't quite complete; I'll go and finish it up, it only depends upon the governor. Whew! It wants making up

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one's mind to it, though! there, I am screwed up now, but it's a twister, Old Den, I can tell you. *Exit* GUY, L. 1 E.

DENIS. Poor little Flo! Benson turned out a scoundrel, I hear, and she's teaching music now. It's strange how easily we get over these things. If any man had told me when she married Benson, that in six years, I could have brought myself to think of Flo Grannitt without a wet eye I'd have knocked him down. And now, perhaps, I'm going through it all again. No, no; Jessie is not playing with me, I won't think that possible, but I'll find out to-night. *Exit* DENIS, R.

Enter GROUSE, L. U. E., *meeting* DRUCE.

GROUSE. My friend, are you the butler?

DRUCE. Butler! don't you see my livery?

GROUSE. Well, what are you?

DRUCE. I'm Mr. Guy Warrington's regimental servant.

GROUSE. So you know Mr. Kavanagh?

DRUCE. I've heard of such a party

GROUSE. Is he dining here to-night by any accident?

DRUCE. No, he appeared to be doing it on purpose.

GROUSE. Then he is here! Can I see him?

DRUCE. (*looking round*) No, I don't think you can; but you know best.

GROUSE. Don't prevaricate, sir.

DRUCE. Prevaricate! I don't know what that is; but it don't sound like the sort of thing I'm likely to do. Seldom do anything over three syllables, sir!

GROUSE. Look here—I'm a lawyer, and I must see Mr. Kavanagh!

Enter BOODLE, L.

BOODLE. What's this?

GROUSE. I'm a lawyer, sir, and I wish to see Mr. Kavanagh on important business.

BOODLE. (*to* DRUCE) Bai Jove! (*to* DRUCE) Tell Mr. Kavanagh his solicitor wants him.

GROUSE. (*crosses, C.*) Not his solicitor, sir, Mr. Kavanagh's solicitor is a chancery—I'm a criminal!

BOODLE. A what? (*aghast*)

GROUSE. A criminal lawyer, sir. Mr. Kavanagh wouldn't put his affairs into the hands of a criminal.

BOODLE. No; I should think not! But I say—a criminal?

GROUSE. Yes, sir, a criminal lawyer.

BOODLE. Bai Jove! But I thay, more criminal than other lawyerth.

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GROUSE. My practice, sir, is almost exclusively confined to crime.

BOODLE. Bai Jove! But I thay, what have you done, and ain't you ashamed of it?

GROUSE. Ashamed of it, sir? I glory in it! (*goes up—sits*, C.)

BOODLE. Bai Jove! Here's a hardened thcoundrel, Druth. (*crosses*, R. C.)

DRUCE. (R.) Sir?

BOODLE. Tell Mr. Kavanagh.

DRUCE. Yes, sir—beg pardon—shall I send for a constable, sir?

BOODLE. No; I'll look after him. It will amuthe me.

DRUCE. Well! I have heard of honest lawyers, but here's a lawyer honest enough to own that he's a thief. He must be a beginner. *Exit* DRUCE, R.

BOODLE. Well, Mr.——

GROUSE. Grouse—well known at the Old Bailey and Middlesex Sessions.

BOODLE. Yes, I'll be bound you are! Well, Mr. Grouse, you puzzle me.

GROUSE. I should say, sir, from the look of you, that you're the sort of gentleman that is easily puzzled.

BOODLE. Bai Jove, you're right. I am! you're quite right. Thath doothid good. He thaw it at a glance. Now, hereth a fellow with a power of observation much above the average, and talenth that I dare thay would do honour to any respectable calling he might thoothe to adopt, wandering at liberty about a gentlemanth groundth at ten o'clock at night, proclaiming to everybody he comes acroth that heth a criminal and glorieth in it.

Enter KAVANAGH.

KAVAN. (C.) Druce says I'm wanted. Who's this?

GROUSE. (*rise*) If you mean me, sir, I'm a lawyer, and I want to see you on very pressing business. If you mean him, sir, he's a lunatic, and ought to be looked after!

KAVAN. Why, Boodle, he's read you off like a book. (*to* GROUSE) If you'll step into the dining room, I'll hear what you have to say. (GROUSE *going to house*)

BOODLE. (*aside to* KAVANAGH) Don't let him into the houthe. He's a criminal, he thays tho.

KAVAN. What?

BOODLE. Fact!

KAVAN. I'll hear what you have to say here.

GROUSE. But not before him.

BOODLE. Oh, I'll go—(*aside to* KAVANAGH) and send for a constable. *Exit* BOODLE, R.

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KAVAN. Now then, what is it?

GROUSE. My name is Grouse, sir, of Grouse and Cookit, Thavie's Inn. I've come, sir, on a very melancholy errand, sir! Poor Miss Blake, sir, orphan, sir!

KAVAN. Well, what of that?

GROUSE. I feel for an orphan, sir. *I'm* an orphan, sir.

KAVAN. Your parents are in luck.

GROUSE. (*piously*) I trust so, sir, I trust so. Well, sir, I bring bad news about Miss Blake, very bad news. Bear up, sir, it's a blow, but bear up.

KAVAN. Well, what is this about Miss Blake?

GROUSE. Well, sir, she inherited her fortune of twelve thousand pounds through her father dying intestate at Cadiz, where he was in practice as an English solicitor. (*crosses*, C.)

KAVAN. Well?

GROUSE. Well, her father ain't her father. He adopted her when she was twelve months old, and having brought her up as his daughter, never had the heart to undeceive the pretty little gal—and when he died, suddenly two years ago, she succeeded to his fortune as a matter of course. Bear up, sir, it's a blow, and it's coming, but bear up.

KAVAN. But if Jessie Blake is not Blake's daughter, his estate should go to his next of kin, and that is——

GROUSE. You, sir! (KAVANAGH *sits*, R.) Bear up, sir, it's a blow, but bear up.

KAVAN. Why did you not mention this at the time of Mr. Blake's death?

GROUSE. Why should I, sir. The pretty little girl was an orphan, and I didn't know that Mr. Blake had any relations. I held my peace. Well, I learnt only last week that he had a nephew alive. Well, *then* I didn't care. The pretty little gal was an orphan all the same. But when I learnt that that nephew was an orphan too, my heart yearned towards him, and I said, "Now," says I, "it's orphan against orphan, and let the best orphan win!"

KAVAN. You'll want to be paid I suppose? Besides your costs out of pocket, what do you want?

GROUSE. The orphan, sir, has twelve thousand pounds. I don't believe I could bring myself to disinherit her on any terms short of snacks.

KAVAN. Snacks?

GROUSE. Half-and-half.

KAVAN. (*rises*) Why you inf——. If you have evidence of this it appears to me that I could compel you to produce it, and punish you for having concealed it.

GROUSE. *Could* you, sir? You know more about these

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things than I do, and I'm always glad to learn. How, sir?

KAVAN. By searching the registers throughout the country till I find out all about her.

GROUSE. That would be a capital plan if you knew the young lady's name, sir; but you don't. (KAVANAGH *crossing*, L.) And if she was born in Great Britain or Ireland: but she wasn't.

KAVAN. And if you fail to prove all this?

GROUSE. I shall be satisfied with the conciousness that the scattering of these here shiners, will be in the hands of an orphan whichever way it goes.

KAVAN. Well, I'll agree, provided that my liability is contingent on the recovery of the property. But what shall I have to do?

GROUSE. I'm off to Cadiz, to-morrow. You must join me there in six weeks to establish your claim before the local courts. But in the first place, you must go to town and see my partner—there's his card (*giving card*)—and enter into the necessary arrangements. He won't be hard on you. He's an orphan too.

KAVAN. All right. I'll see to it.

GROUSE. Good evening, sir.

KAVAN. Mind, you take your chance!

GROUSE. Yes, sir, the satisfaction of feeling——

KAVAN. Exactly—of course. Virtue's its own reward.

GROUSE. Indeed, sir! how do *you* know?

KAVAN. How do I know? Because, you scoundrel, vice requires to be so devilish well paid for its dirty work, that it swops up all the profit.

GROUSE. So it does, sir. We divide the profits. Good evening. *Exit*, R.

KAVAN. Jessie Blake not old Blake's daughter. Oh, it's a lie! But what object could that fellow have in coming all the way down here if his story is false? Twelve thousand pounds to share with him! Poor Jessie! Well, I want it more than she does. I eat more—I drink more, a good deal more. I do everything more that costs money! (*sits*, C.) She can easily retrieve her position; she can make a fortune by teaching music—I can't. She can live on her relations—I can't. She can marry Guy Warrington—I can't. Hollo! here's the noble savage——

Enter DENIS, R. 1 E.

"Lo! the poor Indian whose untutored mind," and so forth. Well, Denis, my boy, you don't look happy. Are you pining for the dusky Tippety-wee, the oily daughter of the great

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chief Rum Fusti Bang; or does that mighty body fret at having to pack itself into a tight dress suit? Which is it?

DENIS. I say Mr.——

KAVAN. Kavanagh!

DENIS. Kavanagh, why do you say such rude things to me?

KAVAN. Rude? That's not rudeness, my boy, that's chaff—*repartee*, and so on.

DENIS. *Repartee*? What's that?

KAVAN. The art of——

DENIS. The art of saying out loud what well-bred people only think!

KAVAN. Well, that's *repartee* in its roughest state. If I call you a noble savage, and you say to me "Kavanagh" you're a "snob," that's *repartee* in its simplest and most obvious form.

DENIS. And on that account particularly adapted to the use of a beginner, like myself.

KAVAN. Exactly. But if I say, when you approach me, "Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind," and you reply——

DENIS. That the person who calls a man an Indian, because he has travelled in Africa, is hardly an authority on the subject of tutorship?

KAVAN. (*taken aback*) Precisely—that's *repartee* in its highest state of cultivation. That's the sort of thing you'll get to in time. In the meanwhile——

DENIS. In the meanwhile you won't quarrel with me if I conduct myself in the simpler and more obvious form.

(*retires up*, R.)

KAVAN. Damn the fellow! (*aloud*) I tell you what it is, Mr. Denis Grant——

Enter JESSIE, L. 1 E.

JESSIE. What is it, Mr. Kavanagh?

KAVAN. It is this, Miss Blake—I've been giving Mr. Grant a lesson in *repartee*—at present he's a beginner, and handles his weapon clumsily. (*crosses*, L.) I will give him another lesson at an early opportunity. *Exit* KAVANAGH, L. 1 E.

JESSIE. (*delighted*) Have you been snubbing Mr. Kavanagh?

DENIS. Well, yes, I couldn't help it, he brought it on himself.

JESSIE. Oh! I'm so glad. I like to see him taken down. I hope you were very rude to him!

DENIS. Well, I'm afraid I was. (*goes*, R.) I'm rather a rough

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customer, and I'm afraid I've lain by too long, and grown too rusty to take a polish now.

JESSIE. Oh! I wouldn't have you polished for worlds. (*sits*, R.) We don't French polish oak trees!

DENIS. (*foot on bench*) But oak must be polished before it is entitled to take rank as drawing-room furniture.

JESSIE. And do you aspire to take rank as furniture? Does the grand mighty massive living oak aspire to be chopped up into chairs and tables?

DENIS. If the living oak can serve you better in that form than any other——

JESSIE. But it can't. It can best serve me by spreading its great boughs over me, and by letting me sit at its foot, and wonder at the folly of those who would plane down its rugged bark, and cover its leaves with a double coat of green paint. Why, what a First Commissioner you'd make!

DENIS. (*door*, R.) I'm not propounding my own views, but those of the society in which you move. I'm over-matched in England. It's coarse barbaric power against culture and civilization.

JESSIE. Nonsense! It's a primeval forest against a furniture shop! Now, once for all, I won't have you chopped up into chairs and tables—you'll only suffer for it in the long run. Look at Captain Boodle, he's as good a fellow as ever lived, but he's chopped himself up into a chair, and see how Mrs. Fitzosborne sits on him. Well, have you nothing to say? (*takes his arm*)

DENIS. (R.) I've a great deal to say, but I don't know how to begin.

JESSIE. (*walking*, R. C.) Begin at the beginning.

DENIS. But if the beginning should prove to be the end?

JESSIE. Begin again at the end, and try back to the beginning.

DENIS. You give me courage.

JESSIE. Then you should be ashamed to take it from me, I have so little. Why I'm afraid of a frog! Are you afraid of a frog?

DENIS. No, but I am of a woman! Are you afraid of a woman?

JESSIE. Not of any woman I ever saw. But you don't mean to say you're afraid of *me*?

DENIS. (*after a pause*) No, I am not afraid of you. I—I have no reason to fear so tender, and merciful a little lady!

JESSIE. (*alarmed—aside*) Merciful! Mrs. Fitzosborne's own word!

DENIS. (*sits*, C.) We men are strange contradictions. When

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we risk a few hundred pounds, we place it in the hands of an attorney. When we enter on a matter in which the stakes are happiness against misery, hope against despair, life against death; we take our destiny, and place it in the hands of an inexperienced child!

JESSIE. But at whose mercy have you placed such a stake?

DENIS. (*passionately*) At yours, Jessie! I have thought over five hundred ways of saying this; but what I have to say will not be controlled by forms of speech. I have lain awake at night turning my meaning into set words, but it breaks its bonds, and declares itself in its own rough untutored way. I am a plain, rugged, earnest man. I have loved but once before; if you send me away from you, I shall never love again.

JESSIE. Oh! Mr. Grant, I am very sorry for this—very, very sorry. I had no idea of it; I have been warned that I should bring you to this, but I did not believe it—I am such a child! And this night of all others! Mr. Grant, forgive me! I have been thoughtless, but not wicked—I liked you so much more than any of the others—I mean than any of those who were stopping here—and then you were his schoolfellow, and you have been so good to him! And, oh! Mr. Grant, I thought you knew—I thought you knew! (*takes both his hands as if about to speak*) Mr. Grant, I—I—cannot tell you! (*bursts into tears*)

Enter GUY, *hurriedly, prepared for journey*—JESSIE *attempts to go.*

GUY. Don't go, Jessie; you must stop; I've seen the governor, and it's all right. I want Den to see how thoroughly swamped with happiness I am; so he must look at you and hear of you at the same time, or he won't appreciate the full beauty of my position.

JESSIE. Let me go, Guy; you can tell him without me.

GUY. Tell him? *I'm* not going to tell him. He shall hear it from you.

JESSIE. I can't, Guy—indeed, I can't.

DENIS. (*quietly*) Tell me, Miss Blake.

JESSIE. (*reluctantly*) I—I—am engaged to be married to Guy.

GUY. There, my dear old Den!—What do you think of that? Haven't I done well for a fellow of eighteen? (*crosses, &c.*) *You* couldn't have done as much, she wouldn't have had you, you great gruff, surly bear! You've had her all to yourself for a week, and ought to have cut me out, but you

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haven't! Not you. Triumph of the slight but civilized Briton over the massive but untutored savage! Tableau!

(*stands in an attitude of triumph, with* JESSIE *in his arms*)

DENIS. Indeed, I wish you a happy life together, Jessie! (JESSIE *crosses*, C.) I may call you Jessie? (*taking her hand*)

JESSIE. Oh, yes.

DENIS. Jessie, I am happy to think that you will live in the care of so good and true a fellow as my dear old friend, Guy Warrington. God bless you! (*kisses her*) I did—I did not know of this.

GUY. (C.) Then you're a blind old mole. Why, it's been going on—how long has it been going on, Jess?

JESSIE. (C.) I don't know.

GUY. Well, strictly speaking, it's been going on about sixteen years, but it only began to look like business about six months ago.

DENIS. (R.) Six months? As long as that? (*aside*) Poor Guy!

GUY. Jessie, dear, in five minutes I must be off; tell Mrs. Fitz I should like to say good-bye to her—I want to speak to Den for one moment. *Exit* JESSIE, R. 1 E. (GUY *changes his manner to one of great earnestness*) Denis, you see that girl, she is life and death to me; I am dreadfully uneasy at leaving her—she—she is the best girl in the world, but she has no mother, and my father don't understand her—and—and she has one fault—she—she is a little bit of a flirt. You wouldn't think so, to look at her, would you?

DENIS. (*bitterly*) No, not to look at her!

GUY. She means no harm, it's high spirits and nothing more, but men misunderstand her; and I'm dreadfully absurdly jealous, I know, but I can't help it. It would keep me awake all night, if I thought there was no one to look after her, and tell her when—when she has gone far enough. Denis, I'm only a boy, but I love her so dearly that I would kill myself if she forgot me! Will you look after her while I am away? Will you keep her straight in my interests? Will you watch over her, and protect her from such dangers as if she were to be your own wife? Promise me this, by our old school friendship.

DENIS: By our old school friendship I promise it.

GUY. Thank you, Den, I shall go away quite happy.

Enter JESSIE, R., KAVANAGH, L., MRS. FITZOSBORNE *and* BOODLE, R.

KAVAN. Well, Guy, off at last to fight the Paynim foe?

GUY. No, I'm not going to fight any foe! I'm going to

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garrison, a confounded dull old rock for five shillings and threepence a day. I'm only a sub, Mr. Kavanagh, and I can't get up a war for your amusement; and if I could I wouldn't. But if ever I've the misfortune to have to go into an action, I believe I shall behave like a gentleman. Good bye, Mrs. Fitz, don't be too hard on Boodle. Good bye, Baby. Mr. Kavanagh, I don't mind your chaff, let's shake hands on it. Denis, old man, good bye. Jessie, good bye. (*kisses her—then going, returns suddenly*). Oh, Jessie my love, never mind them; (*to the others*) We are parting for a long time, and you'd do so too. (*embraces her passionately*) Denis, you remember your promise?

DENIS. Yes!

GUY. And you'll keep it?

DENIS. Yes!

GUY. True?

DENIS. Grip!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*On board Mr. Warrington's Yacht off Cadiz. Mainmast and portion of mainsail forming wing,* R.; *portion of forsail forming wing,* L.; *cabin gangways,* R. *and* L.; *skylight,* C. *Morning.*

MRS. FITZOSBORNE *and* BOODLE *discovered;* MRS. FITZOSBORNE *reading*—BOODLE, *lying on his back on some rugs, smoking.*

BOODLE. This yacht-life is awfully jolly.

MRS. F. It's awfully slow.

BOODLE. Ith the same thing. On thore, the world'th fatht and get's a-head of me. At thea, the world'th thlow and keepth alongside of me. The world and I get on very well in a yacht. I thould be thorry to leave the world in a yacht. I'm afraid my remarkth fail to intereth you?

MRS. F. Yes, they bore me.

BOODLE. You're very good. They uthed to amuthe you.

MRS. F. They amuse me still when you're serious. I can laugh at your sentiment, but your jokes are too solemn.

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BOODLE. Nothing could be fairer than that.

MRS. F. Oh, Baby Boodle, what a donkey you are!

BOODLE. Yeth, I've heard the remark before.

MRS. F. They may well call you Baby!

BOODLE. Yeth, i'th a pretty name. There'th a very remarkable thircumthtance connected with that name. Curiouthly enough, I wath firtht called "Baby" when I was quite a little child. I'th wonderful how they hit off my character even then. It wath me all over. Hullo! whath thith? (*kicking a portmanteau*)

MRS. F. Mr. Kavanagh's luggage.

BOODLE. The doothe! Then he'th come on board.

MRS. F. He joined last night from Cadiz.

BOODLE. Where ith he?

MRS. F. Below. I wish he'd come on deck.

BOODLE. Tho' do I. He'th a thnob and you thnub him and I like it. I thnub him too, but you thnub him better than I do.

MRS. F. Thank you.

BOODLE. Not at all. I'th a great lark to thee you and Kavanagh together, and ath we must have him and can't help ourselves; ith doothid lucky you're on board to take him down. Here he ith. Now go in at him.

Enter KAVANAGH, L.

MRS. F. (*changing her manner*) Oh, Mr. Kavanagh, I'm so delighted to see you.

KAVAN. Indeed!

MRS. F. I am indeed. Now that you've joined we shall have such fun.

KAVAN. You're very good to say so.

MRS. F. Oh, no! Indeed I mean it.

BOODLE. (*aside*) Wait a bit. He'll catch it presently.

MRS. F. Three weeks' yachting have blunted my faculties. Everybody is so stupid on board, and I'm glad you've come, because I want you to sharpen them for me.

KAVAN. Really, Mrs. Fitzosborne, that sounds like a compliment!

MRS. F. Does it? I like a man who's easily pleased.

BOODLE. I'th coming, I don't know what it is, but i'th coming!

KAVAN. Well, when you admit that it is in my power to sharpen your blunted faculties——

MRS. F. I credit you with all the brilliant qualities of a knifeboard! There—I'm better after that! (*sits*)

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BOODLE. Ith come! He'th got it! I didn't know what it wath; but I knew it wath coming.

KAVAN. (*hurt*) I recognise the bluntness of which you complain. If it is in the power of a knifeboard to——

MRS. F. To impart point and polish to my remarks, you will be only too happy to serve me in that capacity. Wasn't that what you were going to say, Mr. Kavanagh?

KAVAN. Well—yes. (*aside*) Confound the woman, I wish she'd let me finish.

BOODLE. You're too hard on him, Mrs. Fitz. Whenever Mr. Kavanagh hath a poor little thquib to dithcharge you alwayth take the bang out of it!

MRS. F. Mr. Kavanagh handles his squibs so awkwardly that he would certainly burn his fingers with them if I didn't take them out of his hands and finish them for him.

BOODLE. That's another; nothing could be fairer than that!

MRS. F. Oh, Baby Boodle, do go and get your breakfast while it's calm.

BOODLE. I was only backing you up.

MRS. F. Thank you, but I'm quite equal to meeting anything Mr. Kavanagh can say without assistance.

BOODLE. He's getting it all over him. (*aside*) Don't spare him; he's bad form—he's got no friends. *Exit.*

MRS. F. Now that foolish fellow has gone, let's begin. Are you fond of yachting?

KAVAN. Sometimes.

MRS. F. In fine weather?

KAVAN. No, in good company. In yachting, one's enjoyment depends so much less on oneself than on one's companions.

MRS. F. You are quite right not to depend too much upon yourself.

KAVAN. Yes. I may be hypercritical, but I am tired of myself.

MRS. F. You see you have had so much of yourself.

KAVAN. No doubt.

MRS. F. But there, I won't be rude any more, I'll say a pretty thing to you. I'll admit that if your epigrams and repartees amused you as much as they amuse others, you would never tire of your own society.

KAVAN. (*with an elaborate bow*) Thank you, Mr. Fitzosborne.

MRS. F. But they don't, do they!

KAVAN. No they don't, indeed.

MRS. F. You see you've heard them so often before! (*aside*) This man does give one such chances!

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KAVAN. At all events I may conclude from your admission that they amuse *you*, that *you* have not heard them before.

MRS. F. No, indeed! the society in which I move is so horribly well-bred. I can forgive almost any rudeness if it's clever.

KAVAN. Then I may conclude that I am forgiven?

MRS. F. (R. C.) I have nothing to forgive so far—you have been neither rude nor clever.

KAVAN. (L. C., *annoyed*) If you don't take care I am afraid I shall certainly be one of those two things. (*crosses*, R.)

MRS. F. Yes, I know which.

KAVAN. I am afraid I shall be rude.

MRS. F. (R. *and* L.) Yes, that's what I meant. It's wonderful how you smart people wince under the operation of your own weapons when they are turned against you!

KAVAN. Why not! A surgeon would gladly cut off both of my arms if necessary, but——

MRS. F. But he would expostulate if you were to retaliate, by cutting off both of *his*——? Wasn't that what you are going to say?

KAVAN. Yes, if you had permitted me to finish my sentence.

MRS. F. If you were to cut off both his arms?

KAVAN. Certainly.

MRS. F. After he had cut off both of yours?

KAVAN. Yes, at least—that is——

MRS. F. Don't apologise for him. Under the circumstances his astonishment would be excusable!

KAVAN. Mrs. Fitzosborne—once for all I must protest——

MRS. F. Why you don't mean to say that you are getting angry?

KAVAN. I'm very much afraid I am. (*crossing*, C.)

MRS. F. Oh, but that won't do at all. Jessie expressly invited you to relieve the tedium of the voyage.

KAVAN. Did she? Are you quite sure?

MRS. F. Quite sure.

KAVAN. Then I'm very sorry for our young military friend. (*shaking her hand*)

Enter BOODLE, *from cabin.*

BOODLE. They've had a row, and they're making it up. Mrs. Fitz, the letter bag has arrived. Here are two letters for you, one for me— (*looks at it*) Tailor, eh? Good-bye. (*throws it into the sea*) Nothing could be fairer than that. One for you. (*to* KAVANAGH) And now, Mrs. Fitz, breakfast is ready.

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MRS. F. Oh, I don't want any breakfast!

KAVAN. (*aside*) From Grouse, eh? Now, what the deuce can Grouse want? I only left him yesterday.

MRS. F. (*aside to* KAVANAGH) I shall keep a chair for you, next to mine. After breakfast we will renew the subject—but not a word yet.

BOODLE. The steward tells me there's a first-rate devil waiting for us below.

MRS. F. Captain Boodle, I'm quite sure of that. (*in affected astonishment*)

BOODLE. No, no; when I thay a "devil," of courth I mean a grill.

MRS. F. (*relieved*) Oh, well, you're not the first man who has mistaken cause for effect!

Exeunt BOODLE *and* MRS. FITZOSBORNE *into cabin.*

KAVAN. Now, here's a letter from Grouse, eh? Very good! Now, before I open this, let me see how the coast lies. Jessie seems to have taken a violent fancy to me. She invites me of her own free will to join this yachting party, and commissions her friend to let me understand that Jessie is to be had for the asking. Now, if I marry Jessie, I can dispense with Grouse altogether, for her money will, in that case, be mine, or as good as mine. Good-bye, Grouse! The connection is humiliating; I'll have nothing more to do with him; I'll return his letter unopened. Stop a bit! The worst of returning a letter unopened is that you never know what's in it. Steward!

Enter STEWARD, L.

STEWARD. Sir!

KAVAN. Place some boiling water in my cabin.

STEWARD. Yes, sir! *Exit* STEWARD.

KAVAN. There are ways of returning a letter unopened after you have mastered its contents, especially when it's enclosed in an adhesive envelope. *Exit,* L.

Enter JESSIE *and* BOODLE, *from cabin.*

JESSIE. Oh! what a lovely morning, Captain Boodle!

BOODLE. Yeth, pretty well. It wath until you came on deck.

JESSIE. (*sits,* L. C.) Indeed? I haven't noticed any change.

BOODLE. Bai Jove! But no you wouldn't, becauthe you are alwayth with yourthelf, you thee; you don't think of it at the time, but you are. Now, with other fellowth, ith different. If a man wath alwayth bethide you—if he had the happineth of being alwayth bethide you—he wouldn't notith any change.

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I am not alwayth bethide you, but you alwayth are bethide yourthelf! (*aside*) That contains a very pretty thentiment, though ith moth awkwardly put.

JESSIE. Then you really mean to say that my bright presence on deck makes everything else dull by contrast!

BOODLE. (*rises*) Thath it! Thath what I wanted to thay! Everything! Everything, Mith Blake, exthepting me, and it politheth me up into thuch a thtate of fireworkth that I hardly know myself. Now, I don't go off like thith when I'm alone.

JESSIE. But there's Mrs. Fitzosborne—you say all sorts of good things to her, don't you?

BOODLE. (*sitting on deck—confidentially*) No—thath the truth. No. She takth me down. Whenever I open my mouth the alwayth hayth, "Oh! Baby Boodle, what a donkey you are." Ith doothid thmart of her; but nothing makth me feel so like a donkey as telling me I am one. Don't you feel that yourthelf?

JESSIE. (*laughing*) Oh, invariably! (*rises*)

BOODLE. Now, I believe I could talk to you for ever!

JESSIE. Oh! Captain Boodle!

BOODLE. I could—if you would let me.

JESSIE. Oh! I should only be too happy! But what would Mrs. Fitzosborne think?

BOODLE. Oh, thee wouldn't care; thee's got Kavanagh to amuthe her. She hates Kavanagh, and she thnubs him; I thnub him too, but I don't thnub him as well as thee does. Kavanagh acts upon her as a red rag acts upon a bull. I believe she'd toth him for a penny.

JESSIE Toss him for a penny?

BOODLE. Yeth. I mean she'd gore him. I don't mean headth and tailth—and yet I *do* mean headth and tailth, when you come to think of it! Ha, ha! nothing could be fairer than that! Hallo! here 'ith the noble thavage.

Enter DENIS *from the cabin*, R.

DENIS. Captain Boodle, Mrs. Fitzosborne wants you below. Don't go, Jessie.

JESSIE. But I wish to go.

DENIS. I want to speak to you seriously. Come, give me *carte blanche* to say what pleases me.

JESSIE. I'll give you *carte blanche* to say what pleases *me*. Our tastes are so different that I'm afraid we shall not agree on any other condition.

DENIS. Ah! But this is not a question of taste.

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JESSIE. *Then* I shall be happy to hear what you have to say on it. (*sits on skylight*, C.)

DENIS.) Well, then—it's the old story. I don't think you are treating Guy fairly.

JESSIE. Yes; I knew it was that.

DENIS. Ah! conscience, Jessie!

JESSIE. Conscience? Nonsense—experience!

DENIS. Experience?

JESSIE. Yes, of you. You never speak to me on any other subject. It's your invariable theme—my constant oblivion of Guy. (*rising and crossing*, R.) I am going to him as quickly as the yacht will take me. What more can I do? It isn't my fault that the Skylark don't make more way. Oh! you *are* unreasonable to blame me because the Skylark don't make more way!

DENIS. Nonsense, Jessie, I blame you because you flirt with Captain Boodle.

JESSIE. But I can't help it. He's such a goose. Now you must admit that he's a goose.

DENIS. By all means, but that doesn't seem to meet my objection. Put it in this way: would you talk to Captain Boodle as you do if Guy were present?

JESSIE. I don't know. If Guy were present, I should talk to *him*.

DENIS. (C.) Well, Jessie, it's impossible to talk rationally to you!

JESSIE. (R). You certainly have *not* been talking rationally to me!

DENIS. You must know that I am only asking you to do what is right.

JESSIE. You must know that I am not likely to do what is wrong.

DENIS. I know you are likely to do what is thoughtless and giddy, and what is liable to be misrepresented by meddling ill-natured people.

JESSIE. Evidently, Mr. Grant. (*curtseying*)

DENIS. (*after a pause*) Jessie, I think you will allow that if I had been actuated by the motives of a mere busybody, I should scarcely pursue my theme after that remark.

JESSIE. It was with the view of discouraging you that I made it. (*crosses*, L.)

DENIS. But I am not to be discouraged. I love that boy very dearly. I have sworn that I will keep watch and ward over his interests, and at the risk of forfeiting your regard, I will keep my word.

JESSIE. Mr. Grant, your want of familiarity with the usages of society may hold you excused up to a certain point. Let

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me tell you that you have reached that point, and if you presume to overstep it, we are strangers. (*going, but returns*) Denis, you make me say things that I am sorry for afterwards; but I have a quick temper, and it is not pleasant to be misrepresented. Forgive me if I have been unkind, but—but—I don't mean any harm; and—and—Captain Boodle is such a goose—and—and you can't think I care for him—and (*coldly*) if you please I prefer to be trusted.

DENIS *stands for a moment, then bows, and exit*, R. (*sitting on ladder*) It's very hard, I'm sure I'm as fond of Guy as I can be; and, if I do flirt, nothing comes of it, except a pleasant half hour instead of a dull one. Guy likes me to be happy; he told me before he went away to try and be happy, and not fret for him; and I have tried to be happy, and I haven't fretted for him, and what more can he want? (*wipes her eyes*)

Enter MRS. FITZ *from fore-cabin.*

MRS. F. Jessie, you're crying!

JESSIE. Am I? Mr. Grant has been lecturing me again.

MRS. F. What a donkey that man is!

JESSIE. No, no; he means well.

MRS. F. Means well! Who doesn't? *I* mean well, but I don't dislocate society in consequence.

JESSIE. But you mustn't call him a donkey. He is actuated by the best intentions.

MRS. F. My dear Jessie, the only difference between a donkey with good intentions and a donkey with bad intentions is that one is a good donkey and the other isn't. What has he been saying to you now?

JESSIE. He says I flirt with Captain Boodle.

MRS. F. Well, so you do.

JESSIE. But not much, and you don't mind it?

MRS. F. Not a bit, my dear.

JESSIE. And he don't mind it?

MRS. F. No, he's quite resigned.

JESSIE. And I don't mind it, and if you don't mind it, and he don't mind it, and I don't mind it, what more can he want? What *are* you to do on board a yacht? I'm sure I wouldn't flirt with Captain Boodle on shore.

MRS. F. No; one must be very much at sea to flirt with Baby Boodle.

JESSIE. It's my duty to make myself agreeable to uncle's guests.

MRS. F. Of course.

JESSIE. Then why does Mr. Grant interfere? I won't stand it! (*rises*)

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MRS. F. Don't stand it, Jessie. Let him think what he pleases. Flirt with Baby as much as you like. I won't interfere, and when Mr. Grant remonstrates, admit it all and glory in it.

JESSIE. I will! It's only fun after all. The idea of supposing that any one who had seen Guy would think seriously for one moment of such a goose as Captain Boodle! Oh! I beg your pardon, dear!

MRS. F. My dear Jessie, when I first saw Captain Boodle, Guy was about six months old. He was a fine boy, but a *grande affaire* was out of the question.

VOICE. (*from a boat*) Yacht ahoy!

Enter BOODLE, R.

BOODLE. Yacht it is!

VOICE. What yacht's that?

BOODLE. 'Pon my life I forget! It'th a devilith pretty name I know—tho Thky-something. Thky-thail? Here, Jenkins!

Enter SAILOR, R.

(BOODLE. (*looks at name embroidered on the man's Jersey*) Thkylark!

VOICE. Is Mr. Kavanagh on board?

BOODLE. Oh yeth, he'th on board, bleth him! (*boat comes alongside*)

VOICE. Then *I'll* come on board!

Enter GROUSE, *on deck—he is very pale, as if sea-sick.*

BOODLE. It'th the criminal!

GROUSE. It's the lunatic!

BOODLE. How are you? Didn't exthpect the pleathure of theeing you here!

GROUSE. I'm stopping in Cadiz.

BOODLE. I with'th you were! Buthineth?

GROUSE. No, I'm a gentleman at large!

BOODLE. I know you're a gentleman, becauthe the Act of Parliament thays tho, and I thee you're at large, becauthe Cadiz ithn't a penal settlement. You don't look well.

GROUSE. I'm not well. It's the motion of the boat. I want Mr. Kavanagh directly.

BOODLE. (*calling down cabin skylights*) Kavanagh!

KAVAN. (*below*) Hullo!

BOODLE. Fellow to thee you.

KAVAN. All right. *Exit* BOODLE, L.

GROUSE. (*sitting on ottoman*, R. C.) Here's a pretty business! I've sent him the letter I meant for Tim Cockit, and if he's opened it the whole blessed business is blown upon! Here's

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a situation, and I ain't well! I'm too giddy to think. I might as well be drunk. I'd sooner be drunk. It ain't a bit more confusing, and it's much pleasanter!

Enter KAVANAGH *from cabin.*

KAVAN. (*very coldly*) Mr. Grouse, I believe you asked for me?

GROUSE. (*aside*) It's all over—he's read it!

KAVAN. What is your business with me?

GROUSE. Mr. Kavanagh, I ain't well, and what I say must be taken without prejudice. I ain't in a business frame of mind. A office floor is one thing and a lopping sea is another.

KAVAN. Be good enough to come to the point.

GROUSE. Mr. Kavanagh, sir, you got a letter from me?

KAVAN. I did—I received it ten minutes ago!

GROUSE. Sir! Mr. Kavanagh! Sir! Mercy! It was a joke, sir. Look over it, sir.

KAVAN. Look over what?

GROUSE. The letter, sir! It was my high spirits, sir! I wrote it at sea—in that boat—and when I'm at sea I'm in such spirits. It's the fresh air, sir; the motion of the boat. It always excites me. You can't suppose I meant it; I'm not such a scoundrel as that, notwithstanding looks which are against me.

KAVAN. Yes, you are an unprepossessing person.

GROUSE. Looks ain't a man's fault no more than his name is. My looks is bad, but I ain't a scoundrel. My name's Grouse, but I ain't a bird. But look over it.

KAVAN. Look over you're not being a bird?

GROUSE. No, sir. Look over my having been tempted in a sprightly moment to write that letter. It was the motion of the boat, sir; it always makes me sprightly. And if you could oblige me with a drink of cold water, sir——

KAVAN. I wonder a knowing atto ney like you should indulge in a joke, which, if taken seriously might involve——

GROUSE. Penal servitude, sir. You're quite right, and perhaps struck off the rolls into the bargain. But it was all owing to feeling larky on a lopping sea, sir. (*aside*) I'm committing myself! I know I am! If I could only catch him on dry ground I'd come over him in no time. But at sea, he sails all round me!

KAVAN. Now, Mr. Grouse, attend to me. You ask me to look over something contained in this letter. What you refer to I don't know——

GROUSE. You don't know what I refer to?

KAVAN. I don't know what you refer to, because the letter is still unopened.

GROUSE. (*changing his manner*) Ha, ha! Don't you think I

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knew that? Why, I saw it in your hand! I'll be bound you thought I was in a funk, now didn't you? (*tries to take it, KAVANAGH withdraws it*) Allow me! (KAVANAGH *makes as though about to open it*) You've no call to read it, sir! (*much alarmed*)

KAVAN. Why not?

GROUSE. It ain't necessary, sir. I'll tell you what's in it. Sir, I implore you to return it. (*aside*) Oh, lor! here's a go, and I ain't well!

KAVAN. Do you mean to say that you really wish me to return this letter unopened?

GROUSE. Upon my life and soul I do!

KAVAN. Very good. Now, Mr. Grouse, I will return this letter unopened if you desire it; but if I do, I repudiate you and your schemes altogether.

GROUSE. (*aside*) He can't! I've got him hard and fast! It's down in black and white, stamped, and all reg'lar. (*aloud*) As you please sir—as you please.

KAVAN. As to the agreement between us, I require you to destroy it.

GROUSE. Oh, I ain't got it here, it's on shore!

KAVAN. Then I will retain the letter until you produce it.

GROUSE. (*aside*) Damn! (*aloud*) Is that your fixed determination?

KAVAN. That is my fixed determination! Shall I open the letter? (*about to do so*)

GROUSE. No—no! (*producing agreement*) It's too bad—and I'm ill-treated! (*gives him agreement*)

KAVAN. Good. (*tears it up, crosses,* L.) There is your letter, and you will be good enough to go over the yacht's side immediately, and not show your face in my presence again. (*crosses,* L.)

GROUSE. But dash it, I've gone in for your case to such an extent, that I'm a ruined man if I stop now! Think of my time—think of my clients.

KAVAN. The county has already provided for them.

GROUSE. But I shan't know where to find 'em when I want 'em.

KAVAN. Try Holloway—I mean the prison, not the pills!

GROUSE. Think of my 'elth—broke down in your service.

KAVAN. Try Holloway—I mean the pills, not the prison!

GROUSE. (*door,* R. C.) Take care, Mr. Kavanagh, I'm an ugly customer on shore!

KAVAN. You're no beauty at sea.

GROUSE. So you'll work this alone, eh? You've sucked my brains, and now you're going to use my information, eh? Very good—now mind Mr. K., you can't do without me. If

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you get at this here property, I've got that as 'll smash you up, right and tight, whichever way you put it.

KAVAN. But I am not going to work this alone; I am not going to work this at all.

GROUSE. Not going to work it at all?

KAVAN. No, I propose to leave the orphan in undisputed possession of her property. Now, go.

GROUSE. (*going over the side*) Well!

KAVAN. Well?

GROUSE. Well, Mr. K., I was going to say one thing, you're either a blazing liar or a blazing fool! And look here, Mr. K., my only doubt is whether you ain't both. Good morning. (*disappears over gangway*)

KAVAN. So much for Mr. Grouse! Whew! I feel all the moral elevation of a man who's done a good action with the additional satisfaction of knowing that virtue is in this case the most paying course. (*takes out pressed copy*) The infernal scoundrel! Fortunately my hand-press was on board, and I've taken a facsimile copy of Mr. Tim Cookit's letter. To think that——

JESSIE *appears* R., *at cabin gangway.*

Miss Blake! I'm so glad, so very glad to see you!

JESSIE. So you've joined at last. That's capital! We've exhausted Captain Boodle, and we were looking for you rather anxiously.

KAVAN. It's always pleasant to know that one's arrival has been impatiently awaited.

JESSIE. (*rather surprised*) Oh! I didn't say impatiently.

KAVAN. You said——

JESSIE. Rather anxiously.

KAVAN. Well then, it's pleasant to think that one's arrival has been looked for rather anxiously. But may I not say impatiently?

JESSIE. Well—(*aside*) I'll put in a word for Mrs. Fitzosborne, (*aloud*) Well, yes; I think you may say impatiently by one of us. As for the other——

KAVAN. Oh! never mind the other.

JESSIE. Oh! thank you, Mr. Kavanagh.

KAVAN. (*aside*) Her friend! (*aloud*) Well, I retract. It was a rude thing to say, but I spoke on the impulse of the moment, and your words gave me such pleasure, that I was carried away by them. You forgive me?

JESSIE. Well, I don't know—it was very rude indeed—but there I forgive you. (*she takes her hand*) I forgive you, Mr. Kavanagh! I tell you I forgive you! (*she struggles to free her*

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hand) Don't, Mr. Kavanagh! (*very angrily*) I'm extremely angry with you, sir. I tell you I forgive you!

KAVAN. And won't you give me your hand in token of forgiveness?

JESSIE. No! Won't my word do?

KAVAN. It would in England, but off Cadiz, we must conform to the custom of the country.

JESSIE. And what are the customs of the country?

KAVAN. Well, among other things, recent acquaintance begins by calling one another by their Christian names.

JESSIE. Indeed

KAVAN. Yes; in these latitudes, I am Corny, and you are Jessie.

JESSIE. (*angrily*) Mr. Kavanagh!

KAVAN. To call you Miss Blake in these latitudes would be an impertinence. It would be as monstrous as if I were to call you Jessie in Westmoreland.

JESSIE. I don't understand you.

KAVAN. In these latitudes, people begin with Christian names and get on to surnames when they are on very intimate terms indeed.

JESSIE. Oh, you are joking!

KAVAN. Oh, no; it's quite reasonable when you come to think of it.

JESSIE. Reasonable?

KAVAN. Yes, Christian name comes before surname, and new acquaintances begin at the beginning. Its only taking things in their proper order. If we are becalmed here much longer, who knows but that we get on from one thing to another, until I know you well enough to call you Miss Blake.

JESSIE. Never!—I mean always—that is——

KAVAN. Yes, that is?

JESSIE. I hope we shall *not* be becalmed any longer. (*crosses*, R.)

KAVAN. And I should be content to be becalmed here for ever—Jessie!

JESSIE. (*indignantly*) Mr. Kavanagh! Why do you wish to be becalmed here for ever?

KAVAN. (*affecting delight*) Oh, how kind of you to call me Mr. Kavanagh! in these latitudes! and may I—*may* I call you Miss Blake?

JESSIE. Of course—I mean no—I—Why do you wish to be becalmed here for ever?

KAVAN. Because every knot the yacht makes will bring me nearer and nearer to absolute desolation. Ah, Miss Blake, I know too well why you are going there, and who awaits your arrival. Gibraltar is a rock on which all my fondest hopes must be inevitably shattered.

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MRS. FITZOSBORNE *has entered from cabin, and overheard these words.*

MRS. F. Then why go to Gibraltar?

KAVAN. Eh? (*turning round*) I do not go of my own free will, Mrs. Fitzosborne!

JESSIE. Is not that rather familiar?

KAVAN. Familiar?

JESSIE. In these latitudes. Her name is Emily Fitzosborne. As a recent acquaintance, shouldn't you begin at the beginning?

KAVAN. Certainly—of course! (*aside*) Confound it!

MRS. F. I should not think you are the sort of man to do anything on compulsion.

KAVAN. Nor am I, Mrs. Fitz—Emily!

JESSIE. You don't mind his calling you Emily? He was just explaining that he couldn't help it in these latitudes.

MRS. F. Mind it! It's the only sensible thing he's said since he came on board.

JESSIE. And he says that you must call him Corny!

KAVAN. Only in these latitudes.

JESSIE. Yes, and he says he should be glad if the yacht were becalmed in these latitudes for ever!

KAVAN. (*aside to* JESSIE) That I might call you "Jessie" for ever!

Enter BOODLE *and* DENIS.

JESSIE. (*seeing* DENIS, *hurries away, saying*) Mr. Kavanagh, how dare you? *Exit* JESSIE, R.

MRS. F. But a perpetual calm would be very monotonous, Corny!

KAVAN. No fear of perpetual calm when *you* are on board, Emily.

BOODLE. Emily, eh? Nothing could be fairer than that!

MRS. F. Nonsense, Baby, think of the latitude.

BOODLE. Yeth, I *am* thinking of the latitude: and a pretty considerable latitude it ith! Mrs. Fitz, allow me to offer you my arm. Mr. Kavanagh, I thall have the pleathure of renewing the quethtion of latitude at an early opportunity.

MRS. F. Oh! Baby Boodle, what a donkey you are!

Exeunt BOODLE *and* MRS. FITZ, L.

KAVAN. Hang it! I hope I'm not going to get into a scrape on her account. Confound her!

DENIS. (*coming forward*) Mr. Kavanagh, I want a word with you. I heard you speak to Miss Blake, in a manner which seemed to me to require explanation.

KAVAN. Here's another! The deuce you did! And may I ask who the devil are you?

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DENIS. Don't lose your temper—I mean to keep mine.

KAVAN. It is a matter of supreme indifference to me whether you lose it or keep it. What right have you to demand an explanation?

DENIS. None whatever. But I mean to have one, nevertheless.

KAVAN. The deuce you do!

DENIS. Look here, Mr. Kavanagh, I speak on the presumption, that I am addressing a gentleman.

KAVAN. Damn your presumption.

DENIS. By all means, if it is an erroneous one. But, if you please, we will assume for the sake of argument that you *are* a gentleman. You have a fertile imagination, and will have no difficulty in drawing upon it to that extent. Now, sir, I have reason to believe that you are here with the avowed object of winning Miss Blake's affections. You have still to learn, Mr. Kavanagh, that she is already engaged to be married to your friend Guy Warrington.

KAVAN. (L.) I am fully aware of that fact.

DENIS. (R.) Ah, you forget; I am assuming for the sake of argument that you are a gentleman. It is on that hypothesis that I say you are not aware that she is engaged to your friend Guy Warrington. In ignorance of that fact you approach her delicately and with diffidence. You are then informed, upon good authority, that her hand is promised to your friend, and you immediately retire and leave him in undisturbed possession of the happiness he has secured for himself.

KAVAN. Do I? You don't know me!

DENIS. Yes, I think, I do; but I am assuming—for the sake of argument—that you are a gentleman.

KAVAN. Assume what you please, but don't credit me with a magnanimity which is wholly foreign to my nature.

DENIS. Very well; then I must proceed on a different tack, and I may tell you, that in laying siege to a young lady whom you know to be already engaged, you are behaving like a cad, and in not leaving the yacht after she has plainly indicated to you that your presence is a nuisance, you are in the position of a man who has been kicked and doesn't mind it. (*goes*, R.)

KAVAN. Why, man, you must be mad to talk to me in this way? Who the deuce *are* you? Are you aware that my presence on board this yacht is due to Miss Blake's express and spontaneous invitation?

DENIS. (*astonished*) To Miss Blake's invitation?

KAVAN. To her unsolicited and spontaneous invitation—that I am here in the capacity of her declared suitor, and with her full consent.

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DENIS. (*after a pause*) Mr. Kavanagh, that's not true!

KAVAN. What?

Enter JESSIE *and* MRS. FITZOSBORNE, L.

JESSIE. Mr. Kavanagh! what in the world is the matter?

KAVAN. Miss Blake, Mr. Grant has thought fit to take exception to my presence on board this yacht. I have explained to him that I am here at your express invitation. He tells me that I am telling a lie!

MRS. F. (*aside*) Don't stand it, Jessie! Go in at him!

JESSIE. I will! (*to* DENIS) Is this so, Mr. Grant?

DENIS. It is so, Jessie!

JESSIE. Mr. Grant, let me tell you once for all, that your interference has become unsupportable.

DENIS. Am I then to understand that in stating that he is here at your express and spontaneous invitation, that he is telling the truth?

JESSIE. Most certainly!

MRS. F. Most unmistakably; I was present when the invitation was given.

DENIS. But he tells me that he is here in the capacity of a declared and accepted suitor.

MRS. F. (*bashfully*) So he is!

DENIS. You will surely contradict that?

JESSIE. For the purpose I have in view, I will contradict Mr. Kavanagh in nothing.

DENIS. But, great heaven! have you forgotten Guy Warrington? And do you know this man's character?

JESSIE. (*to* DENIS, *who is boiling with indignation*) I know, sir, that he is my uncle's guest, and that in insulting him you have insulted your host, and have insulted me. I insist upon your apologising instantly to Mr. Kavanagh! Instantly, sir —and most amply!

DENIS. (*after a pause*) Mr. Kavanagh, it appears that I have been hasty and that I have done you an injustice. I beg your pardon. Miss Blake, I am going on shore, and I need hardly say that I shall not return. I see but too plainly that I can do no good by remaining here—that I am, unfortunately, but an element of discord; in short, that I had better find my way to Gibraltar by another route. (*he goes over the side*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

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ACT III.

SCENE—*Guy's Quarters at Gibraltar.*

DRUCE *discovered laying out his master's mess clothes.*

DRUCE. Well, in this world everything seems to go wrong; here's my master being a-trotting of himself up and down, between his quarters and the harbour, back'ards and for'ard, any time this last five days to see whether the Skylark with Miss Blake aboard is in sight; and to-day, when she's signalled, blessed if he ain't on duty, and can't leave the barracks. P'raps there's a world in which everything goes right—a world in which everybody has everythink he wishes for; but it ain't this one. P'raps it's as well. I don't know that it would answer in the army. There'd be too many commanders-in-chief, and not much left for 'em to command. Fancy two hundred thousand field marshals, and, say, one contented rank and file! Lord, how they would re-organize him!

Enter GUY, *very excited, in patrol jacket.*

GUY. She's here! She's at anchor in Man-o'-War basin! She's been at anchor this half-hour and I never knew it. Druce, double down to the harbour—as hard as you can go. Tell them I'm on duty and can't leave the barracks—and look here—bring them up here—and if they're not on board they'll have gone to the hotel—find them, any way. *Exit* DRUCE. At last—at last! To think that Jessie and I are in the same town again—breathing the same air—cooled by the same sea-breeze! It's a wonderful thought! And in half-an-hour, I shall hold her in my arms—tight! Half-an-hour! She may be here at any moment! It's too much happiness for one fellow: I must share it with some one. (*calls*) Druce!

Enter DRUCE—*livery hat and coat.*

DRUCE. Sir!

GUY. Arn't you off yet?

DRUCE. Off directly, sir.

GUY. Stop! With what description of feelings are you expecting the Skylark?

DRUCE. Description of feelings, sir?

GUY. Yes—yes—arn't you impatient to see her?

DRUCE. (*very stolid*) Desperate impatient, sir.

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GUY. Arn't you going wild with joy now that's she's in harbour?

DRUCE. Wild, sir?

GUY. Yes, man; Yes—wild—wild—wild!

DRUCE. (*stolidly*) Wild arn't the word, sir.

GUY. If I didn't allow you to go down to the harbour directly, wouldn't it drive you mad?

DRUCE. Stark staring mad, sir!

GUY. Then off you go, and run like blazes.

DRUCE. Like blazes, eh? Blest if I could run like anything else in this here climate. I'm off, sir!

Exit DRUCE.

GUY. There, I'm better now. Druce is an ass, but it's better to confide in an ass than in nobody. There she lays! (*looking out of window*) and a rare beauty she is. (*takes telescope*) Perhaps I may be able to twig Jessie with this. (*uses it*) No! There's nobody on board except the crew. Jessie *must* be on shore. It's a surprising thing to feel, for the first time in one's life, that there's a delightful girl—a real live delightful girl and no deception—at least none to speak of—saving up for you! It's impossible to realize it now—I suppose I shall get used to it in time, and get to look on Jessie as a matter of course, and shan't be fidgetty whenever she's out of my sight. Joe Copley, our senior major, is never so jolly as when *his* wife's out of *his* sight! That's odd; but, then he's been married five-and-twenty years, and the novelty may have worn off. Oh, Jessie—Jessie, why don't you come? Why don't you come? Why don't you come?

Enter DENIS.

DENIS. (*gravely*) Guy!

GUY. They're here! Denis! My dear old Den, this is kind of you, to come up to my quarters so soon. Where's Jessie? Why, what a solemn old phiz! (*alarmed*) There's nothing the matter. Where is she? She's quite well?

DENIS. There is nothing the matter. She was very well when I saw her last.

GUY. When you saw her last? That can't be very long since!

DENIS. Some days—about a week.

GUY. A week!

DENIS. Yes, I left the yacht at Cadiz, and travelled here by steamer. I was delayed three days at Cadiz, or I should have been here sooner.

GUY. But the yacht's in harbour. She's been anchored this half-hour.

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DENIS. Indeed? That's odd.

GUY. But why did you leave her?

DENIS. Well, no great matter, perhaps—a question of taste—I didn't get on very well with Kavanagh.

GUY. No—I should think not (*sits*)

DENIS. (*sits*) In fact we quarrelled.

GUY. Quarrelled? What about?

DENIS. Well, I'm afraid I was in the wrong, but I don't like Kavanagh. and I can't help showing it. I believe I did him an injustice. At all events I had to apologise to him.

GUY. You apologised to that snob?

DENIS. Yes; don't talk of it—change the subject—it's not a pleasant one. I'm very glad to see you, old fellow.

GUY. There's something wrong, old man—something more than a row with a fellow like Kavanagh. You are sure Jessie was quite well when you left her?

DENIS. Yes, quite well.

GUY. And happy?

DENIS. Yes, she seemed so.

GUY Did she know of your quarrel?

DENIS. Yes, she knew of it.

GUY. And she sided with Kavanagh?

DENIS. Yes, she sided with Kavanagh.

GUY. I'm very sorry for that, very sorry. But you *were* wrong?

DENIS. Yes, I was wrong. I made a mistake. Drop the subject.

GUY. And you've taken care of her? You've watched over her? You haven't let her flirt? She's been quite true to me?

DENIS. My dear Guy, I was true to my trust until I left the yacht; and I should not have left the yacht, even after what had occurred, if I had not been quite sure that my presence on board was no longer necessary.

GUY. True? (*holding out his hand*)

DENIS. Grip! (*taking it*)

GUY. Thank you, Den. Thank you, and again. Do you know, I began to think at first that there was—that there was something wrong. I can't tell you how I thank you for your kindness.

DENIS. (*rises*) There is little need.

GUY. And, Denis, old man, I expect her here every minute! Think of that! She once said to me that it was worth quarelling to make it up, as *we* used to make it up. I say now that it's worth parting for six weeks to meet each other again, as we shall meet. (*knock*) By Jove, she's here! (*goes to the door*)

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Enter GROUSE.

Why, who are you?

GROUSE. My name's Grouse, of Grouse and Cookit, attorneys-at-law, of London. Your name's Warrington?

GUY. That is my name. What do you want?

GROUSE. It's business!

GUY. Well, go on!

GROUSE. Private and particular. (*nodding at* DENIS)

GUY. Nonsense! I've no secrets from this gentleman!

GROUSE. But I have, a good many! No offence to you, Mr. Grant.

DENIS. Do you know me?

GROUSE. Oh, yes! I know you. I saw you at Beauclere—also on board the Skylark—just before that unpleasant shindy with Mr. Kavanagh.

DENIS. (*aside to* GROUSE) Silence, man; not a word to Mr. Warrington about that.

GROUSE. Oh, in course not. Oh, certainly! Oh, to be sure! Mum is the expression. Dumb as an oyster. Oh, yes, not a word about that.

DENIS. I'll take a turn in the barrack square, Guy; I shall be close at hand if you want me. *Exit* DENIS.

GUY. Now then, who are you?

GROUSE. I'm a lawyer, sir, of five-and-thirty years' standing.

GUY. Oh! Wouldn't you like to sit down?

GROUSE. Thank you. (*sits*)

GUY. Now then, what's your business?

GROUSE. It refers to Miss Blake, sir.

GUY. Well, go on! She's quite well?

GROUSE. I humbly trust so, sir; but I didn't come from her, sir: I come about her. I believe you consider yourself engaged to Miss Blake?

GUY. Well, sir?

GROUSE. And a sweet young couple you'll make—perhaps! You don't happen to be an orphan, sir?

GUY. No; I am not.

GROUSE. I'm sorry for that—it's a pity; but never mind, you will be some day if you're a good lad.

GUY. What do you mean?

GROUSE. Nothing, sir; only I've come to do you a good turn, and I'd rather you was an orphan on principle. It's always a pleasure to do a good turn to anybody; but as I used to say to my late missus, the luxuriousness of feeling is increased when one's dealing with an orphan. She was an orphan, and I'm an orphan.

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GUY. (*quietly*) Have you a son?

GROUSE. (*surprised*) Yes, sir, I *have* a son!

GUY. Then in about two minutes *he'll* be an orphan if you don't come to the point. Once for all, what is your business with me?

GROUSE. I'm coming to it. Miss Blake's got a tidy lot of money.

GUY. Well?

GROUSE. At least, you *think* Miss Blake's got a tidy bit of money.

GUY. I know she has property of some kind to which she succeeded on the death of her father.

GROUSE. That's it. Miss Blake ain't Miss Blake. Her father wasn't her father. Her property ain't her property. She was his adopted daughter, and he died without a will, so her property belongs to Mr. Kavanagh, the next of kin. At least, that is Mr. Kavanagh's case, but I know better.

GUY. If Mr. Kavanagh's statement is true, you can't suppose that I should counsel Miss Blake to resist his claim.

GROUSE. No, but it ain't true. As a general rule, Mr. Kavanagh's statements never *are* true. But he's got two strings to his bow. He intends to prove his case if he can, but he can't, and he intends to marry Miss Blake if he can't, and he can. As you're going to marry her too, I thought you might like to know——

GUY. Mr. Kavanagh is at liberty to intend anything he pleases.

GROUSE. Oh, of course. Only some people object to their wives being married to anybody else but themselves! It's an amiable weakness, and its amiable character is increased when there's twelve thousand pounds at stake! Now this is what I propose——

GUY. Why, you infernal scoundrel, Mr. Grant has just told me that——

GROUSE. I wouldn't believe Mr. Grant if I was you. I wouldn't believe anybody if I was you. Except me! Mr. Grant's an interested party.

GUY. What?

GROUSE. Mr. Grant and Mr. Kavanagh had a row at Cadiz.

GUY. I know. He told me so.

GROUSE. Yes, but did he tell you what the row was about?

GUY. No!

GROUSE. Did you ask him?

GUY. Yes.

GROUSE. And he declined to tell you?

GUY. He *did* decline to tell me.

GROUSE. I thought so. *I'll* tell you. It was jealousy.

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GUY. Ridiculous! When I tell you, sir, that Mr. Grant is my oldest and dearest friend, I have told you enough to show——

GROUSE. You have said enough to show that you're about nineteen years old. My good sir, Mr. Grant proposed to Miss Blake six weeks ago and was rejected by her!

GUY. Do you mean to say that you know all this of your own knowledge?

GROUSE. Lord bless you, sir, the row, and the reason of it, was the talk of the whole place. Look here—local English paper—"The Cadiz British Sentinel." (*reads from paper*) "Fracas on a yacht. An amusing encounter occurred on board the Sk-dash-lark, between Mr. Gr-dash-nt, and Mr. K-dash-v-dash-n-dash-gh, rival suitors for the hand of Miss Bl-dash-ke, a wealthy o-dash-phan. Mr. Gr-dash-nt, left the yacht abruptly, and is travelling by another route to G-dash-b-dash-a-dash-t-dash-r, where he hopes to meet Mr. K-dash v-dash-n-dash-gh. The matter will probably give employment to local gentlemen of the long robe, as the words used by Mr. Gr-dash-nt were undoubtedly act-dash-onable." Now, sir, allow me to go on with what I've come to propose.

GUY. Stop! I'll listen to you presently. This matter must be cleared up first. (*calls at window*) Grant!

GROUSE. But, sir, you mustn't mention this or my plan will fail.

GUY. Hold your tongue, man, and go in there. (*pointing to inner room*)

GROUSE. But if Mr. Grant knows of it?

GUY. Do as I tell you or I'll have you kicked out of barracks.

GROUSE. Well, if ever I do a good turn to any but an orphan again, I'm d-dash-mn-dash-d! *Exit* GROUSE.

GUY. (*with newspaper*) Oh, it must be a lie! and yet his objection to tell me the cause of his quarrel, his leaving the yacht so suddenly, his constrained manner when speaking of Jessie—this newspaper paragraph, everything seems to endorse the scamp's statement.

Enter DENIS, GUY *stands sternly apart without looking at him.*

DENIS. Well, got rid of him?

GUY. (*with forced calmness*) Yes.

DENIS. Not a creditor I hope?

GUY. No.

DENIS. Glad of that, old boy.

GUY. He has come to tell me of a creditor.

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DENIS. Creditors are generally ready enough to announce themselves.

GUY. There are creditors, Denis Grant, whose trade is so utterly contemptible that they are ashamed to declare it. My creditor is one of them. There are debts that it is pleasanter to pay than to receive; my debt is one of them.

DENIS. (*after a pause*) There is something wrong, Guy!

GUY. There *is* something wrong, Denis! I'm the victim of a piece of infernal treachery. There is something so wrong that, if the news that fellow has brought me is true, I have placed the whole happiness of my life in the hands of a man who has most shamefully violated that trust.

DENIS. Yes, this is serious, indeed, my poor Guy! (*taking chair*) Come, old boy, tell me all about it.

GUY. Is it necessary to tell you more?

DENIS. (*aside*) Poor fellow! he knows the worst!

GUY. (*bitterly*) I see that it is not.

DENIS. Let us be sure that we understand one another, Guy. Tell me all about it. Who is the man has wronged you, and what was the trust you reposed in him?

GUY. The trust—my love for Jessie Blake! (DENIS *shows that he expected this*) The man—Denis Grant!

DENIS. (*starting up suddenly*) Guy, what in the world do you mean? Are you serious?

GUY. Look, and judge for yourself.

DENIS. But what do you refer to?

GUY. I refer to this: When I left England I begged you to watch over Jessie Blake and protect her. You availed yourself of that trust to endeavour to win her from me. That is what I refer to.

DENIS. Guy, you are the victim of some monstrous lie!

GUY. I am!

DENIS. Sir!

GUY. Denis Grant, you quarrelled with Kavanagh on board that yacht.

DENIS. Yes!

GUY. Your quarrel had reference to Miss Blake. (DENIS *is silent*) I say your quarrel had reference to Miss Blake. Answer me, man, in heaven's name—and in heaven's name, say no if you can!

DENIS. If you insist on an answer——

GUY. I *do* insist on an answer.

DENIS. Then take this one, and be satisfied with it. It *had* reference to Miss Blake; be wise and ask no more.

GUY. I demand a full account of the circumstances of that quarrel.

DENIS. (*after a pause*) I cannot give it.

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GUY. You refuse?

DENIS. I refuse.

GUY. Then I will supply one. Read that. (*hands newspaper*)

DENIS. (*reads*) Great heaven! is it possible that you believe this miserable—this preposterous lie?

GUY. That is false!

DENIS. It is infamously false. Guy Warrington. Do you know me so little that you have allowed this abominable paragraph to give you more than a moment's irritation?

GUY. If that is false will you tell me the true story?

DENIS. (*after a pause*) No, Guy! I will not! Had I known how little you know of the truth I should not have told you as much as I have. You shall never know the rest from me. It should be sufficient for you that I tell you that this paragraph, based on a certain substratum of truth, is in itself a monstrous and mischievous falsehood!

GUY. It should not be sufficient, because, if you are capable of the villany here charged against you, you are also capable of covering it with a lie!

DENIS. If you know me, you would not think me capable of this villany.

GUY. It is because I did *not* know you that I thought you incapable of it. Will you tell me the true story of your quarrel with Kavanagh?

DENIS. No!

GUY. Remember what I have at stake, and in heaven's name tell me the whole truth.

DENIS. No!

GUY. I can bear it now, whatever it is; it cannot be more bitter than the belief that you have been false to me. Tell me, Denis Grant, for pity's sake! Den, dear old Den, let me think anything rather than that you have done this fearful thing. Tell me! Tell me all!

DENIS. No!

GUY. Then I accept this paragraph as it stands, and so accepting, I tell you that you have behaved like a——

DENIS. Stop, you don't know what you're doing. Give yourself time to think before you utter another word. I do not ask it for myself. Have mercy on yourself, if you will have none on me! (*taking his hand*) Guy, old fellow, it is not so much that this is hard for me to bear as that it is hard for you to bear. It is not so much that you throw hard words at me, as that you think you have reason to do so. Trust me a little longer. I have borne much for you; bear this for me, until Jessie sets me right with you. Be a man!

GUY. Will you tell me the story of your quarrel with Kavanagh?

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DENIS. No! You shall never hear it from my lips.

GUY. (*in desperation*) What would you have me think? Is my common sense to avail me nothing in dealing with you? Am I to take your word in the face of evidence and evidence that comes cropping up at every turn? Denis Grant, I swear to you that I would give ten years of my life to hear you proved innocent.

Enter KAVANAGH—*he stands irresolutely at door.*

DENIS. And here is the man who of all others can best place it beyond doubt.

KAVAN. Dear me, I'm afraid my visit is inopportune. Shall I go?

DENIS. (L.) No, sir; on the contrary, your visit is marvellously well timed. Mr. Kavanagh, this foolish boy has heard of our quarrel on the yacht and attributes it to rivalry for Miss Blake's hand.

KAVAN. (C.) Well?

DENIS. I call upon you, sir, to endorse my assurance that I never appeared on board that yacht in the character of Miss Blake's suitor!

KAVAN. Now, Mr. Grant, attend to me. We will assume, if you please for the sake of argument, that I am addressing a gentleman.

DENIS. For heaven's sake, man, don't trifle with this unhappy fellow!

KAVAN. Allow me to proceed. At an early stage in your acquaintance with Miss Blake, you propose to marry her. She rejects you.

DENIS. Stop, in heaven's name!

KAVAN. She rejects you perhaps wisely—perhaps foolishly! *I* think wisely, but then I am no doubt prejudiced. Having a modest faith in the beauty of your own character, you continue your attentions until you find yourself face to face with a successful rival, whom in the heat of the moment you grossly and grievously insult. You discover your mistake, and make under compulsion a formal and unsatisfactory apology, which the presence of ladies compels your rival to accept. Eventually, however, you meet your rival where there are no ladies, and having had time to reflect on your conduct, you offer him an ample and circumstantial apology—not from your lips merely, but from the very bottom of your heart.

DENIS. You miserable liar!

KAVAN. (*haughtily*) No, no, sir—you forget—I am assuming—for the sake of argument—that you are a gentleman!

Bows and exit, door in flat, R.

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GUY. *Now*, sir, what have you to say? Do you deny that you proposed marriage to Miss Blake?

DENIS. No; I do not deny that.

GUY. Ah!

DENIS. It is quite true? But it was before I knew that you loved her.

GUY. Bah! and you never told me of this?

DENIS. Why should I have told you of it? It would have pained you to hear it—it would have pained me to tell it—it would have pained her to have it told! It would have done much harm and no good.

GUY. It would have done this good, that I should not have entrusted the guardianship of the girl I loved to a rejected suitor. You were bound in honour to tell me.

DENIS. I was bound in honour to keep a secret which was as much hers as mine. I was further bound in honour never to renew my proposals directly or indirectly, and before heaven, I have kept to my bond.

GUY. Before heaven, I don't believe you.

DENIS. It is hard to hear such words from any man, harder from you than any other. When you know the truth, you will never forgive yourself.

GUY. I tell you, sir, that I do not believe you. Do you hear me, Mr. Grant? I say that I do not believe you.

DENIS. I hear you!

GUY. You have helped to rob me of my life, in robbing me of my life's happiness. You have behaved like a scoundrel. Don't speak, I will not believe one word you say. Do you hear me, sir? Do you hear me? Damn it, man, will nothing rouse you short of this? (*strikes him*)

DENIS. (*seizing him and forcing him into a chair*) You fool! listen while I tell you what I have done for you. I have devoted myself to your interests, and in protecting them I have made enemies everywhere! I have incurred reproach from Jessie Blake—ridicule from Kavanagh—insult, unspeakable insult from yourself. Go your ways; but take back the word of one who is ten years older in years and twenty in experience—that you will find few friends who will bear for you what Denis Grant has borne—who will take from you what Denis Grant has taken. (*releases him, down*, L.)

Enter JESSIE, KAVANAGH, MRS. FITZOSBORNE *and* BOODLE, R.

JESSIE. Guy—dear, dear Guy! Why, won't you speak to me? It is I—Jessie!

(*he remains seated with his face covered by his hands*)

DENIS. Miss Blake, I will tell why he won't speak to you. He believes that my quarrel with Kavanagh, sprung from

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motives of jealousy. He refused to believe my denial—he struck me! That blow which nearly drove me out of my senses, seems to have restored him to his. He is sorry and ashamed!

GUY. Jessie, what am I to do? What am I to believe?

JESSIE. Believe? Believe that I have been wilful, petulant, wicked; believe that I behaved badly to him and to you. Believe anything rather than that Mr. Grant has wronged you. (*crosses*, L. C.) Denis Grant, I have no words to express my grief at what has occurred. I have no words that can fitly tell Guy how true you have been to him and to me. But you have a brave and noble nature, and I think you can forgive even me? After all I am only a child! (DENIS *takes her hand*)

GUY. But Kavanagh told me——

KAVAN. What I believed to be true. I know nothing of the charge you confided to Mr. Grant. I sought Miss Blake's hand, and I looked at him as a rival.

DENIS. Then you admit that your statement that you were invited by Miss Blake is——.

MRS. F. (R. C.) True, quite true. It's a dreadful thing to have to say before this gentleman (*indicating* BOODLE) and that person (*indicating* KAVANAGH), but—I've been the cause of all this—and I advised Jessie to act as she did—and I deserve to be humiliated; and—and I must own, that the invitation to Mr. Kavanagh, was given at my request, and I'm ashamed to say in my behalf. (*crying*—DENIS *goes up*, L.)

KAVAN. Oh! Mrs. Fitzosborne, I had no idea of this. Why, will you believe me, I thought you disliked me, or I should have made myself much more agreeable. If I had known of this earlier! Why, you could have had no idea at the time that——

MRS. F. (*sobbing*) I could have had no idea at the time that you were an unscrupulous, disreputable, lively, unconscientious, good-looking adventurer. Wasn't that what you were going to say, Mr. Kavanagh?

KAVAN. Not at all. For once, Mrs. Fitzosborne, you are quite mistaken. (*he retires up to* DENIS)

MRS. F. Baby, I've behaved very badly——

BOODLE. Well, upon my word, Mrs. Fitz—I think you have!

MRS. F. I'm very sorry, because I see I've pained you; but I've had a lesson, and I won't pain you any more. Could *anything* be fairer than that? (*sobbing*)

BOODLE. Nothing *could* be—I mean no—nothing. (*aside*) Be hanged if she ain't crying!

MRS. F. And you forgive me?

BOODLE. Yeth, I forgive you. (*aside*) I'd no idea they could cry!

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MRS. F. I can never forgive myself.

BOODLE. (*much affected*) Yeth you could, Emily. If you could only thee yourthelf in tearth you'd forgive yourthelf directly!

KAVAN. Let me make a clean breast of it. Miss Blake, there is a consummate scoundrel who was once a clerk of your late father's. His name is——

Enter GROUSE, L.

GROUSE. Grouse—but he ain't a scoundrel.

KAVAN. You here?

BOODLE. It'h the criminal!

GROUSE. It's the lunatic. (*crosses to* BOODLE) If ever they get a commission to enquire into the state of your mind, you'd better put your case in my hands, or the other side will subpœna me as a witness, and it'll be all up with you. Yes, Mr. Kavanagh, I'm here, and in much better health than when we last met. Miss Blake, that person (*indicating* KAVANAGH) proposed to me a scheme by which he might dispossess you of your property. In reply, I sent him a letter, repudiating him altogether. That letter he returned to me unopened. Here it is! (*hands envelope to* DENIS)

DENIS. (*opens letter and reads*) "Sir, I have discovered that Miss Blake is an orphan. I cannot consent to assist you in dispossessing an orphan. Apply to a more hardened attorney. There are many of them in the profession. Yours—Anthony Grouse."

KAVAN. Do you mean to tell me that that is the identical letter you wrote to me?

GROUSE. And you returned unopened. The identical one. (*crosses*, R.)

KAVAN. Not a copy?

GROUSE. The identical one. You hear me, sir—the identical one. (*crosses*, R.)

KAVAN. Very good. Oblige me by reading this, Mr. Grant. (*gives copy of letter to* DENIS)

DENIS. (*reads*) "Dear Tim." Who's dear Tim?

KAVAN. His partner. That letter was enclosed to me by mistake. Read on.

DENIS. "Dear Tim,—old Blake's will has come to hand. When Kavanagh has touched the money, we'll try its capacity for further bloodletting. Yours cock-a-doodly, Toney Grouse."

GROUSE. Why, what's that?

KAVAN. That's a facsimile copy of your letter, taken in my hand press on board the Skylark.

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GROUSE. But, I say, you couldn't have got at my letter, I

tore it into fragments, and threw the pieces overboard It's a forgery.

DENIS. And that (*pointing to* GROUSE'S *alleged letter*) is the genuine document.

GROUSE. Quite genuine!

DENIS. The identical one?

GROUSE. The identical one!

DENIS. Which you tore into fragments and threw overboard? Mr. Grouse, this time you appear to have overreached yourself.

BOODLE. (*to* GROUSE) I thay, when you get committed at the Old Bailey, you'd better get me out of the way, or the other side will thubpœna me as a witness, and it'll be all up with you. (*aside*) Nothing could be fairer than that!

GROUSE. Why, what'll you swear?

BOODLE. What'll I thwear? Why, I'll thwear Grouthe ith black game, and back my opinion at any oddth the prethent company like to name. No takerth! Nothing can be fairer than that!

JESSIE. (*to* GUY, *who is seated at table, with his head buried in his hands*) Guy, dear Guy! I have not been as bad as you think! I *am* a flirt, and I can't help it! Can you forgive me?

GUY. What have *I* to forgive! (*turning to* DENIS) Denis—my dear old Den—I—I'm a gentleman by position, and I've behaved like a snob! I can't put it harder than that!—if I could I would. I—I—are you going to cut me for it?

DENIS. Cut you! My dear boy, a mere acquaintance could do no more.

GUY. Then you forgive me?

DENIS. A mere friend could do no less!

GUY. But really!——

DENIS. Yes, really!

GUY. (*offering hand*) True?

DENIS. (*taking it*) Grip!

Curtain.

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A REGULAR FIX!

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

JOHN MADDISON MORTON, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

Lend me Five Shillings, Three Cuckoos, My Precious Betsy, Where there's a Will there's a Way, John Dobbs, A Most Unwarrantable Intrusion, Going to the Derby, Your Life's in Danger, Midnight Watch, Box and Cox, Trumpeter's Wedding, Done on Both Sides, Poor Pillicoddy, Old Honesty, Young England, King and I, My Wife's Second Floor, Who do they take me for? Double-Bedded Room, Milliners' Holiday, Wedding Breakfast, Irish Tiger, Attic Story, Who's the Composer? Who's my Husband? Slasher and Crasher, Prince for an Hour, Away with Melancholy, Waiting for an Omnibus, Betsy Baker, Who Stole the Pocket-Book? Two Bonnycastles, From Village to Court, Grimshaw, Bagshaw, and Bradshaw, Rights and Wrongs of Women, Sent to the Tower, Our Wife, Brother Ben, Take Care of Dowb—, &c. &c.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
PUBLISHER,
89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
PUBLISHERS,
38, EAST 14TH STREET.

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A REGULAR FIX.

First produced at the Olympic Theatre, under the management of Messrs. Robson & Emden, *on Thursday, October* 11, 1860.

Characters.

MR. HUGH DE BRASS	Mr. F. Robson.
MR. SURPLUS (*a Lawyer*)	Mr. G. Cooke.
CHARLES SURPLUS (*his Nephew*)	Mr. W. Gordon
ABEL QUICK (*Clerk to Surplus*)	Mr. G. Murray
SMILER (*a Sheriff's Officer*)	Mr. H. Cooper.
PORTER	Mr. Franks.
MRS. SURPLUS	Mrs. Stephens.
EMILY	Miss Cottrell.
MRS. DEBORAH CARTER (*Housekeeper to Surplus*)	Mrs. Leigh Murray
MATILDA JANE	Miss Seyeour.

Time of Representation—50 *minutes*.

Costumes.

De Brass.—Evening dress, suit of black.

Surplus.—Black dress coat, light vest, and black trousers.

Charles Surplus.—Frock coat, white vest, and drab trousers.

Abel Quick.—Frock coat, light vest, and grey trousers.

Smiler.—Long brown coat and coloured leggings.

Porter.—Modern suit.

Mrs. Surplus.—Showy muslin dress and turban.

Emily.—Morning dress.

Mrs. Carter.—Slate-coloured dress, white neckerchief, cap and apron.

Matilda Jane.—Muslin dress and apron.

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A REGULAR FIX!

SCENE.—*A handsomely furnished Drawing Room, folding doors,* C., *shewing an inner room; window at* L. 3 E.; *doors* R. *and* L. 2 E. *The furniture is all disarranged and in confusion; a large easy chair is standing with its back towards the Audience; a hat on a chair close to the* C., *door; a large table,* L. C.; *a newspaper on table.*

At the rising of the curtain MATILDA JANE *is discovered busily employed in putting things to rights in the room.*

MATILDA J. Well, I hope master won't be giving any more balls for some time to come; getting into bed at half-past five, and out again at half-past eight, won't suit *me*; there's no complexion can stand it—'specially a delicate one like mine! but I mustn't stand jabbering here—master's up and dressed, and he'll be calling for his breakfast presently.

(*she pushes the arm chair towards the side, then turning it round facing the Audience, discovers* HUGH DE BRASS *fast asleep in it—he is dressed in a fashionable evening costume*)

MATILDA J. (*seeing* DE BRASS *and starting*) Lawks a mercy—if here isn't a man! and fast asleep!—I wonder who he is, and how he came here!—I have it—he's one of master's fashionable visitors at the ball last night—had too much Champagne perhaps, and fell asleep in the arm chair! I'd better wake him! (*calling*) Sir! (*louder*) Sir!

(DE BRASS *makes a movement, and two or three letters fall on the stage*)

Ah! perhaps these letters 'll tell who the gentleman is—it's no business of mine of course, but I may as well look. (*opening and reading one*) "Dear De Brass,—Look out

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for squalls"—(*suddenly looking towards* C.) Oh, lud! here comes old Mrs Carter, the housekeeper!

(*hastily flings the letters on* DE BRASS'S *lap and pretends to be bustling about*)

Enter MRS CARTER, C. D.

MRS C. Past nine o'clock! and the room not tidy!

MATILDA J. Well, mum, if servants is kept up all night——

MRS C. Hold your tongue! Why I declare you haven't dusted the furniture.

MATILDA J. Yes, I have, mum—all, except the arm chair, and I can't dust that, unless I dust the gentleman too!

MRS. C. Dust the gentleman! What gentleman?

MATILDA J. (*pointing to chair*) Ilim what's in the chair—there, mum.

MRS. C. So there is, I declare! I suppose it's somebody come to see master on particular business this morning, and he's got tired of waiting and gone to sleep.

MATILDA J. Ah! yes! very likely!—unless he's come to see *missus*. (*with meaning*)

MRS. C. None of your impertinent remarks, if you please. What if your mistress *does* forget that she's three-and-fifty next birthday?—what if she *does* see an admirer *in* every man who looks at her?—that's no business of yours!

MATILDA J. No, that's *master's* business; but there are *some* folks as *won't* see nothing.

MRS. C. No insinuations against your master, if you please. Look at his noble, generous conduct to Miss Emily!—doesn't he treat her as if she was his own child?

MATILDA J. He certainly does, and perhaps he *ought*.

MRS. C. Matilda Jane, you surprise me! All I know is, that eighteen years ago a young woman brought me her infant to nurse; she paid me three months in advance and promised to return, but I never saw her again. A gentleman soon after called upon me—it was Mr. Surplus—and informed me that the infant's mother was dead, and that the father, one of his clerks, had absconded to America; he added, however, that he himself would

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adopt the dear little innocent, and the good man was true to his promise—for on his marriage shortly afterwards he received my darling Emily into his family, and in order that we might not be separated, engaged me as his housekeeper.

MATILDA J. And the runaway father?

MRS. C. Has never been heard of since.

Enter PORTER, C., *with a quantity of letters and newspapers.*

Well?

PORTER. Master's letters and newspapers; and please, Mrs. Carter, there's a strange-looking man at the door, enquiring after a gentleman he says is in the house. (*seeing* DE BRASS *in the chair*) Holloa! perhaps that's he. (*a bell is heard to ring outside at* C.) That's the office bell—I must be off.

Gives papers and letters to MRS. CARTER *and runs out,* C.

MRS. C. (*looking at* DE BRASS) I wonder who it is! I'm not at all curious, but—(*another bell heard,* R.) That's master's bell. Here, take these. (*giving letters and papers to* MATILDA JANE) Now, run along!

MATILDA JANE *runs out,* R. D.

As I said before I'm not at all curious, but—(*as she approaches the arm chair a loud ringing heard,* L.) There goes missus's bell!—it's more than my place is worth to keep her waiting. *Goes off at door,* L.

(after a short pause DE BRASS *moves, then opens his eyes, stares full at the Audience for a short time, then looks at the chair he is sitting in, then looks round the room)*

DE BRASS. No, it isn't a nightmare! I'm not at home—this isn't my room—this isn't my bed—this isn't a bed at all—then where am I? I know that's not an original expression—far from it—I've heard it often—on the stage especially—it generally happens thus:—the heroine faints away in her own apartment, comes to again in less than half a minute, and staring intently at her own chairs and tables, exclaims—"Where am I?" I don't know why she should, but she does! Now I can and do say, "Where am I?" because I do *not* know where I am! Let me try and collect my scattered senses as well as the fumes of

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that infernal champagne will allow me. My old friend, Wallop, of the Rifles, dined with me at my club yesterday, and after our sixth bottle of Burgundy, proposed taking me to a ball given by somebody or other, somewhere or other—I like to be particular—I don't remember going there, getting there, who I saw there, or what I did there; I don't know why I shouldn't, but I don't. Yes! I do—I recollect imbibing a considerable quantity of champagne, and I've also a sort of dreamy, foggy, misty recollection of threatening to pitch into Wallop, because Wallop advised me to go home! Then I must have fallen asleep in this chair—Whose chair? What's the maker's—I mean the owner's name? There's only one thing to be done: I must apologize to the master of the house, whoever he is, or the *mistress*, wherever *she* is. Holloa! my letters! (*looking at letters*) What's this? "Dear De Brass—Look out for squalls—a couple of sharp-scented members of the fraternity of bailiffs——" I remember, this was put into my hands on leaving the club yesterday evening. "Bailiffs!" that's *another* expression I've heard before—but at whose suit? (*suddenly*) Suit! that's it! it's my tailor's; I'm perfectly aware that I owe the man the money, and that the man has more than once sent in his little bill, with a request that I'd look over it. Well, I *have* looked over it—for more than three years, and yet the man isn't satisfied—I don't see why he shouldn't—but he isn't! Besides, it's no fault of mine, a man must dress—he's no option—for if a man were to walk about without being dressed, the police would take him up; I don't see why they should—but they would! I'd better be off at once. (*taking up his hat, then stopping suddenly as he passes the window*) Eh? Yes, it is! Pounce, the sheriff's officer, leaning against the lamp-post opposite, as if he was glued to it! Well, if this isn't a *regular fix*, I don't know what is. Here am I, in a man's house, without knowing the man's name, or who the man *is*, or *what* the man is, and I can't leave the man's house, without being pounced upon *by* Pounce the moment I *do* leave the man's house! I can't pay the bill! To be sure I've a cousin thirteen times removed, whose property I must inherit; now, I only want him removed once; but

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no—he's had the gout for the last thirty years in every part of him, except his stomach—that always escapes—I don't know why it should—but it does! What excuse can I make for stopping here till Pounce's patience is exhausted? Holloa! who have we here?—an elderly female—looks like a sort of housekeeper. Old women are proverbially talkative. I'll pump her!

Re-enter MRS. CARTER, L.

MRS. C. I've no patience with missus—that I haven't! Because some gentleman or other said a few civil things to her at the ball last night, she fancies he was paying her particular attentions—at her time of life—ugh! (*seeing* DE BRASS, *who makes her a low bow—aside*) Oh! he's had his nap! (*aloud*) What is your business, sir?

DE B. Did you speak, *miss?* (*aside*) All old women like to be called miss—in fact, the older they are the more they like it.

MRS. C. (L., *tossing up her head—then*) Unless you want to take another nap in that arm chair, sir, I should like to dust it, sir.

DE B. (R.) Dust it? You, miss? No, miss! I'll dust it for you, miss. (*snatching duster out of* MRS. CARTER'S *hand and dusting the chair*) There! If you've got some beeswax and oil about you, miss, I'll give it a polish, miss.—I don't know why I should, but I will.

MRS. C. I don't allow anybody to do *my* work, sir!

DE B. Quite right! for, of course, in so well-regulated an establishment as that of Mr. — Mr. —? (*aside*) She doesn't help me a bit! (*aloud*) I repeat—that in so well-regulated an establishment as that of Mr. — Mr. —?

MRS. C. (*impatiently*) Pshaw!

DE B. (*aside*) Mr. Shaw! I've got his name—I'll put that "Shaw" down. (*taking out small memorandum book and writing in it—then aloud*) Every one, of course, has their especial functions—yours, I imagine, being those of nurserymaid—eh?—perhaps ladies' maid——

MRS. C. I am the housekeeper, sir; and my name is Deborah Carter.

DE B. (*aside, writing*) Down goes Deborah Carter!

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(*aloud*) The housekeeper, and so young!—Shaw's a lucky man, Shaw is!

MRS. C. Shaw! my master's name isn't Shaw!

DE B. Oh! (*aside*) I must scratch that Shaw out again! (*erasing name in mem. book, aloud*) The fact is, I can't, for the life of me, remember names. It was only yesterday I met an old friend I hadn't seen—no—not since I saw him last,—and grasping his hand, I exclaimed, "I can't be mistaken—if your name isn't—" there I stopped —"mine isn't—" there I stopped again.—I don't know why I should, but I did. Now, if I can't remember my own name, it's not to be wondered at that I should forget the name of your respected master, Mr.— Mr.— (*bell rings*)

MRS. C. There's his bell! Your servant, sir!

Curtseys stiffly and exit at L. *door.*

DE B. There! that's my luck! I'll be bound, search England through, and you'd not find more than three old women that won't be pumped, and I've stumbled upon one of 'em! (*suddenly*) Perhaps, by this time Pounce may have— (*peeping out of window*) No! there he is, confound him! Holloa! here's somebody else—a *young* woman this time—I may be luckier with her than the *old* one.

Enter EMILY, R. *door.*

EMILY. (R., *looking about her with caution*) Not here yet! (*seeing* DE BRASS) A stranger! (*about to retire*)

DE B. (L., *bowing profoundly*) A thousand pardons, *madam!* (*aside*) All young girls like to be called madam—in fact, the younger they are the more they like it.

EMILY. You'll find the office at the end of the passage, sir! (*pointing to* C.)

DE B. (*aside*) The office! What office? Lawyers? Auctioneers? Fire?—She can't mean the post office! (*aloud*) I need not ask who you are, madam—your marvellous resemblance to your estimable father—Mr.—Mr.—

EMILY. (*suddenly*) Ah! my father! you know him? His name? his name? (*eagerly*)

DE B. (*aside*) Now, would this—could this happen to anybody but me? A daughter living with her father, and not knowing her father's name!

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EMILY. (*sighing*) I see your mistake, sir; Mr. Surplus has no children.

DE B. Surplus! (*aside, taking out his memorandum book*) I think I may venture to put that Surplus down—(*writing*) the only surplus, by-the-bye, I ever had on my book. (*aloud*) A niece, perhaps, of the worthy "Shaw"—I mean "Surplus?"

EMILY. (*aside*) How very inquisitive he is! (*aloud*) No, sir, I am the child of his adoption.

DE B. (*aside*) "Child of adoption." I'll put that down. (*writing, then aloud*) Benevolent Shaw—Surplus! and in return, you naturally devote yourself to his comforts—and that's no easy task—for sometimes these old bachelors——

EMILY. Mr. Surplus is married, sir.

DE B. (L.) Oh! (*aside, and writing in memorandum book*) Down goes Mrs. Surplus!

EMILY. (R., *to* DE BRASS, *who is again about to address her*) I beg your pardon, sir, and can only repeat that the office is——

DE B. At the end of the passage.

EMILY. (*curtseying*) Yes; and you will probably find Mr. Charles there.

DE B. Eh? oh! yes! "Charles!" exactly; of course, you mean——

EMILY. Mr. Charles Surplus—Mr. Surplus's nephew.

DE B. Exactly. (*aside, and writing in memorandum book*) Down goes Mr. Charles!

EMILY. Or at any rate, Mr. Abel Quick.

DE B. Abel Quick!

EMILY. The head clerk.

DE B. To be sure! (*aside, and writing*) Down goes the head clerk! "Abel Quick." Let me see! (*reading*) "Shaw"—no, he's scratched out—"Surplus—child by adoption, Deborah—Mrs. Surplus, no children—Mr. Charles, nephew—Quick, head clerk!"

(*during this,* ABEL QUICK *has entered,* C.—*he has a roll of law papers under his arm*)

QUICK. (*not seeing* DE BRASS) A thousand pardons, my dear Emily! (*taking her hand*)

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EMILY. (R., *withdrawing her hand*) Hush! Mr. Quick, we're not alone. (*pointing to* DE BRASS)

DE B. (L., *aside*) Oh! Oh! that's your little game, is it!

QUICK. (C., *aside to* EMILY) Who is he?

EMILY. (R.) I don't know—he's been asking me a number of very strange questions.

QUICK. A client, I suppose—(*to* DE BRASS) You'll find the office at the end of the passage, sir.

EMILY. I've told him that twice already.

QUICK. (*impatiently*) I repeat, sir, you'll find the office—

DE B. At the end of the passage—Thank you! I'm in no hurry—I can wait—don't mind me! (*sitting down and taking newspaper off table*)

QUICK. (*after looking angrily at* DE BRASS, *then to* EMILY) I'm aware that I'm later at the office this morning than usual; but, I've had these papers to look over—and Mr. Surplus, like most lawyers, is very particular in matters of business.

DE B. (*aside*) Surplus is a lawyer! Down goes the lawyer! (*writing in memorandum book*)

QUICK. And then, just as I was entering the house, I was accosted by a vulgar-looking fellow, (*here* DE BRASS *looks up, and listens*) who, with tears in his eyes, insisted upon it that his cousin—his "dear, long lost cousin," was here—I think the name he said was Brass—yes, that was it—Brass!

DE B. (*aside*) "Long lost cousin!" that's a regular bit of Pounce!

QUICK. The idea of coming to a lawyer's office for *Brass*, eh? ha, ha, ha!

DE B. (*knocking on table*) Ha, ha! Very good, Quick—very good indeed!

QUICK. (*with a look of astonishment at* DE BRASS, *and then again to* EMILY) Of course, I told the fellow there was no such person here, and away he went.

DE B. (*jumping up and running down to* QUICK) Thank you, Quick—I'm obliged to you, Quick! (*shaking his hand violently, then crosses* C. *to* EMILY) Your most obedient! (*aside to* EMILY, *and pointing to* QUICK) A most worthy young man that! known his family for years! (*aloud*) My compliments to—(*taking his memorandum book and*

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looking at it, aside) to the benevolent—"Surplus," and "Mrs. Surplus," and "Charles," your "child by adoption"—No! not yours—(*looking at book*) I mean Deborah—no—good morning! (*stopping suddenly as he approaches the window*) Zounds! there's Pounce at his post again! (*suddenly taking out his watch and pretending astonishment*) Goodness gracious! how time does fly! Well, it can't be helped—I shan't catch the Turkish Ambassador now, that's quite clear! (*seating himself again and taking up newspaper, to* EMILY *and* QUICK) As I said, don't mind me! (*beginning to read newspaper*)

QUICK. What a very peculiar person! (*looking at* DE BRASS *and then in an undertone to* EMILY) Tell me, Emily, must I abandon all hope?—is Mr. Surplus still obdurate?

EMILY. He fully acknowledges your zeal, your integrity; but while my father's fate remains involved in mystery, he asserts he dare not dispose of my hand.

DE B. (*aside*) A mysterious father!—I'll put *him* down.

QUICK. And yet he openly sanctions and encourages the pretensions of his nephew Charles.

EMILY. Nay; you know I will never be his.

QUICK. A thousand, thousand thanks! (*kissing her hand*)

MRS. S. (*calls without,* L.) Emily! Emily!

EMILY. Mrs. Surplus calls me. Be prudent, dear Abel, for my sake. *Exit at door,* L.

QUICK. (*to* DE BRASS) Since you insist on remaining here, sir, I will send Mr. Surplus to you. *Hurries out at* C.

DE B. (*jumping up and calling after him*) Don't do anything of the sort—I'm in no hurry! (*shouting*) I can wait! (*shouting louder*)

SURPLUS. (*without,* C.) Very well, Mr. Quick—I'll see the gentleman directly.

DE B. (*shouting*) Don't hurry yourself!—I can wait! (*coming down,* C.) What's to be done? Talk of extricating an army from a dangerous position!—pooh!—look at mine—with a lawyer in my front and a bailiff in my rear! I've half a mind to throw myself at—I mean on—the benevolent Surplus; perhaps he'll lend me the money to pay Pounce—I don't know why he should, but he might. (*looking off,* C.) Zounds! here comes the attack on my front. Holloa!—two of them! Eh!—no!—yes,

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it's Smiler!—another sheriff's officer! Why, it regularly rains bailiffs here. (*sits at table,* L. C., *hiding his face with the newspaper*) As I said before, if this isn't a *regular fix*——

Enter SURPLUS *at* C., *followed by* SMILER.

SURP. (*depositing his hat, a white one with a broad brim, on table, and coming down,* C.) Now, Mr. Smiler, listen to me. (*turning to* DE BRASS) I'll attend to you directly, sir!

DE B. (*still seated, concealed by newspaper*) Don't hurry, Shaw—I should say, Surplus.

SURP. (C.) Now, Smiler, here's a list of certain parties against whom I've been obliged, in the course of business, to issue writs. (*giving paper to* SMILER)

DE B. (*looking up—aside*) Writs! I've heard *that* expression before!

SURP. Enquire into particulars, and act accordingly, and remember, Mr. Smiler, no mercy to such as can pay and won't—but every consideration for those who *would* if they could.

DE B. (*aside*) That's exactly my case!

SMILER. (R., *looking over list*) "Jones—Simpson—Jackson—Smith—De Brass." (DE BRASS *looks up*)

SURP. Yes, a bill for £98 13*s.* and 4*d.*, which I discounted By-the-bye, do you know this—De Brass?

SMILER. (*knowingly*) Rather! (DE BRASS *hides his face with newspaper again*) That is—I've been looking for him! (DE BRASS *looks up again*) The bill, I see, fell due yesterday, and I presume was duly presented.

SURP. (C.) Of course, but——

SMILER. (R.) Wasn't paid, of course!

SURP. I suppose I shall get my money, eh?

SMILER. I'm sure I wish you may!

SURP. Oh! you think it doubtful, eh?

SMILER. Doubtful! Oh! dear no! quite the contrary;

SURP. Then arrest him at once!

SMILER. There's no finding of him!

SURP. Seize his furniture!

SMILER. He hasn't got none!

SURP. Confound it! I should be satisfied, if I could only see half my money again!

SMILER. Well, I think I might manage that for you;

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SURP. Do you? Then set about it at once! Good morning, Mr. Smiler!

SMILER. Good morning, Mr. Surplus! *Hurries out*, C.

SURP. (*bowing to* DE BRASS) Now, sir, I'm quite at your service.

DE B. (*aside*) Confound it! I can't tell him who I am now; what the deuce shall I say? (*rising and aloud*) Ahem! Mr. Surplus—I—hope—I—see you in perfect health—I don't know why I should—but I do.

SURP. I beg your pardon, Mr.—Mr.——

DE B. (L., *confused*) Grey! my father's name was Grey, too—I don't know why it should—but it was——

SURP. (R.) You'll excuse me, Mr.——

DE B. White!

SURP. No! you said Grey, just now,

DE B. And I say it again—Grey!

SURP. I don't wish to hurry you, but having a great mass of business to attend to——

DE B. Then pray go about your business—don't mind me—I can wait. (*pushing* SURPLUS *towards* C. D.)

SURP. No! no! I suppose you can explain your business in ten minutes.

DE B. You may think yourself lucky, if I get through it in ten hours! so you'd better go! (*pushing him towards door*) As I said before—I can wait—my time's my own, at present.

SURP. Nonsense! (*placing chairs*, C.) There, sit down and begin! (*sits*, L. C.)

DE B. (R. C.) Well, since you insist upon it—but such are the complications, ramifications, and mystifications of the principal incidents that you mustn't be surprised if you understand rather less about the matter when I've done, than you do now, before I begin.

SURP. (*seated* L. C., *smiling*) Don't be alarmed! I've a tolerably clear head!

DE B. (R. C., *aside*) So he has! hardly a hair on it! (*sits—aloud*) No doubt one of those colossal, gigantic intellects that grasps a subject at first sight, and yet, you don't look like it—I don't know why you shouldn't—but you don't!

SURP. Now then! now then!

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DE B. Ahem! (*aside*) I've not the remotest idea what to say! (*aloud*) Amidst the gathering thunder-clouds which threatened to convulse the social and political economy of the civilized world—I allude, of course, to the latter period of the reign of the Second George——

SURP. Beg pardon—but you're going a long way back!

DE B. Very well—I'll begin with myself. You must know then—that I was born—it may seem extraordinary—that I was born of humble, but honest parents, and came into this world at a very early period of my existence.

SURP. (*smiling*) There's nothing very extraordinary in that!

DE B. I didn't say there was—I merely mention it as a fact. (*half rising in his chair, and looking towards window, aside*) There must be something positively adhesive in that lamp-post, for Pounce to stick to it as he does! (*aloud*) Let me see—where was I?—Perhaps I'd better begin again. Amidst the gathering thunder-clouds—

SURP. No, no—You had just come into the world at a very early period of your existence.

DE B. True! Unfortunately—(*with pretended emotion*) my father died in giving me birth.

SURP. No! No! your mother!

DE. B. Alas! she soon followed him!

SURP. No—you mean your father soon followed your mother.

DE B. (*looking at* SURPLUS *with admiration*) True! you're a great creature! nothing escapes your gigantic intellect! well! where was I?—perhaps I'd better begin again. Amidst the gathering thunder-clouds——

SURP. No, no—you had just lost your parents.

DE B. True! And consequently I was left childless! (*affected*)

SURP. (*affected*) Yes, yes! (*suddenly*) No, no!

DE B. Yes—yes—no—no—yes—no! Really you confuse me to that degree—I'd better begin again. Amidst the gathering thunder-clouds that—(*looking towards window*) He's gone! Pounce has vanished! huzzah! (*jumps up and seizing* SURPLUS's *hand shakes it violently*) Bless you, bless you! (*taking* SURPLUS's *hat off table, and flinging it on, as he runs up stage towards door*, &c.—*suddenly*

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stops) Zounds! Pounce is back at his post again! Confound it! (*dashing* SURPLUS's *hat violently on table, comes down*)

SURP. (L.) Holloa! what the deuce are you about?

DE B. (R., *quietly seating himself again*) Why, of course I'm about to—Let me see, where did I leave off?—perhaps I'd better begin again: Amidst the gathering thunder-clouds——

SURP. Pshaw! In a word, my dear Mr.——

DE B. Brown.

SURP. No, you said White!—no, it was Grey!

DE B. Of course, Grey.

SURP. Then you can't be Brown!

DE B. Eh! Really, my dear sir, you confuse me so, it's enough to make any man change colour! However, as I was saying, on the death of my uncle Benjamin——

SURP. Who the devil's he?

DE B. Didn't I tell you?—my father's sister.

SURP. Pshaw! you mean brother.

DE B. I said so distinctly—my brother's sister. Well, when he died he left three sons behind him: John the eldest——

SURP. John the eldest.

DE B. Jeremiah the youngest.

SURP. Jeremiah the youngest.

DE B. And James in the middle.

SURP. And James in the middle.

DE B. Be good enough to remember the order in which they come, because it's important: John the eldest, Jeremiah in the middle——

SURP. No, James in the middle!

DE B. I said James in the middle!

SURP. No, you said Jeremiah!

DE B. And I say so again: Jeremiah the eldest——

SURP. No, John the eldest!

DE B. I was going to say so, if you'd only give me time. John in the middle——

SURP. No, James in the middle!

DE B. Exactly. Let me see. Perhaps I'd better begin again. Amidst the gathering——

SURP. (*impatiently*) Ugh! In one word, Mr.——

DE B. Green.

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SURP. Green!—no! Never mind. Your statement is really so confused——

DE B. Not at all. Nothing can be clearer, that at the death of my uncle Christopher——

SURP. Just now you said Benjamin!

DE B. Good gracious! what does it signify—Benjamin Christopher or Christopher Benjamin? Suffice it, that he left his property to be equally divided between his four sons——

SURP. Four sons!—three!

DE B. I say three. There was a little 'un in, but he died, therefore three be it—namely, Jeremiah the eldest —

SURP. (*shouting*) No, John!

DE B. I was going to say so. John in the middle——

SURP. No, no, no! James—I should say, Jeremiah!

DE B. Mr. Surplus—it's really a tax upon my good nature—but as you evidently wish me to begin again——

SURP. But I don't! Well, well, this property! What did it consist of—eh?

DE B. Hay? no such thing. Uncle Joseph wasn't a farmer!

SURP. Uncle Joseph! Why, just now you said——

DE B. I know I did! But what does it signify? Benjamin Christopher Joseph, or Joseph Christopher Benjamin; as I said before, he died!

SURP. Very well!

DE B. No, he was very ill.

SURP. No matter; he died, I presume, with a will.

DE B. No, very much against his will!

SURP. I mean, he left a will behind him.

DE B. No, he didn't—not that I mean to say he took it with him.

SURP. I see, he died intestate.

DE B. Wrong again—he died in Kent.

SURP. Pshaw! And the property had to be divided.

DE B. Exactly! and that's *the* point which a comprehensive, gigantic intellect like yours, alone can grasp and grapple with. The property had to be divided; but unluckily in the meantime—(*very rapidly*) Jacob marries—Alexander disappears—Jonathan dies—and up starts Timothy; I don't know why he should, but he did—and what does

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Timothy say? Why, Timothy says—"Oh, oh!" says Timothy, "thirty days hath September, April, June, and November——" but if this is the way the cat jumps, up goes the income tax—and then what becomes of Aunt Sally? Don't you see? (*poking* SURPLUS *in the ribs*)

SURP. (*shouting*) No! my brain's in a whirl! Hark ye, Mr. White or Grey—or Brown—or Green—or whatever your colour—I mean, your name is—you'd better consult another lawyer.

DE B. I'd rather not! Let me see—(*looking at watch*) I've three-quarters of an hour to spare—so sit down, and I'll begin again! (*pushing* SURPLUS *suddenly back into chair*) Amidst the gathering——

SURP. (*jumping up again*) Sir! you must allow me, most reluctantly, but most civilly, to shew you to the door.

DE B. (*aside*) And so fall into Pounce's clutches, no, no! (*aloud*) Very well, I will consult some one else; I'll consult your uncle! (SURPLUS *puts chair back*)

SURP. My uncle!

DE B. Yes; I presume I am addressing Mr.—(*looking at memorandum book, aside*) Mr. Charles Surplus.

SURP. Pooh! I am *his* uncle! You'd better call to-morrow; he's gone out.

DE B. (*aside*) So much the better.

SURP. And isn't likely to come back.

DE B. (*aside*) I'm delighted to hear it! (*aloud*) What a pity! Never mind, I'm in no hurry, I can wait. (*sitting down again*)

SURP. Then you know him?

DE B. Who? Harry?—I mean, Charley?—Known him for years!

SURP. Indeed! Hey-day! (*looking off*) I do declare, here he comes.

DE B. (*aside*) The devil! (*turns on his heel and pretends to admire pictures on the wall,* L.)

Enter CHARLES SURPLUS *at* C.

CHARLES. (C.) My dear uncle, delighted to see you! (*shaking his hand, then aside to him*) I've got such a chance for you! (*looking about him, with pretended mystery—then aside to him*) If you've an odd fifty or two, for

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which you want a safe and profitable investment, I can let you into a *really* good thing!

SURP. (R., *anxiously*) Ah!—well what is it?

CHARLES. Lend them to me!

SURP. You'll get no odd fifty or two out of *me*, I promise you, you'd better apply to your dear friend there, who has known you for years (*pointing to* DE BRASS) Mr. White, I mean, Brown—I should say Grey—no Green—Oh! confound it. *Hurries out at side door*, R.

CHARLES. (*looking at* DE BRASS, *who is still pretending to be intent on examining the pictures hanging up*) "My dear friend!" I wonder who "my dear friend" is? (*tapping* DE BRASS *on the shoulder*) I beg your pardon, sir——

DE B. (L.—*still turning his head away from* CHARLES) don't apologise, sir—I forgive you!

CHARLES. Pshaw! I am informed, sir, that you are "my dear friend."

DE B. (*aside*) What the devil shall I say? (*aloud and boldly*) So I am! (*with affected pathos*) You may forget *me*—but time has not effaced from *my* memory the well-known features of my old playmate and schoolfellow. (*aside, and fumbling in his pockets*) Where the deuce is my book? (*finds book, opens it, and reads behind him*) My old playmate and schoolfellow, Abel Brick—I mean, Slick—no, Quick!

CHARLES. My name, sir, is Surplus!

DE B. Eh? can it be? (*with pretended admiration*) Do I then stand in the presence of the respectable Mr. Surplus!

CHARLES. I am Mr. Surplus, junior!

DE B. In other words, you are not the respectable Mr. Surplus!

CHARLES. "Respectable!"—an uncle, that won't advance his nephew a paltry fifty pounds, especially when he's in danger of being arrested.

DE B. Are you? I'm delighted to hear it! no, I'm not;

CHARLES. Ah! my dear sir, probably *you* don't know what a bailiff is!

DE B. Don't I! it's a sort of beast of prey—isn't it?

CHARLES. However, as I was coming in, who should I meet going out but old Smiler—by-the-bye, he's a bailiff, and does little odd jobs for my uncle!

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DE B. Indeed! (*aside*) I'm one of the "little odd jobs."

CHARLES. Well—hearing what my object was, Smiler said to me—"if you fail with your uncle, I think I can tell you how to get the money,"—and this is his plan: it seems that a certain Mr.—Mr.—— (*feeling in his pocket, and taking out a scrap of paper*) "Hugh de Brass, of the Highflyer Club"—Smiler gave me his name and address—owes uncle £98 13*s.* 4*d.*, and that uncle consents to take one-half. Now, Smiler's advice to me is, to call upon this Mr. de Brass, pick a quarrel with him, call him out, and the chances are, he'll pay the money rather than come out; because, as Smiler says, he's always got half a dozen bailiffs on the look out for him. Not a bad idea of Smiler's, eh? ha, ha!

DE B. Not at all—ha! ha! —(*aside*) If ever I catch Smiler alone—"Smiler and I, and nobody by"—I'll strangle him!

CHARLES. By-the-bye—can you tell me where this "Highflyer Club" is situated?

DE B. To a nicety! Look here!—you've only to take Bermondsey, Battersea Bridge, and the British Museum, as the three sides of an isosceles triangle—don't you see—and then——

CHARLES. Thank ye! And now—now for Mr. Hugh De Brass. (*going*)

DE B. (*stopping him*) What a hurry you are in!

CHARLES. I am! But here comes some one to supply my place—your dear old friend and schoolfellow, Mr. Abel Quick.

DE B. (*aside*) The deuce!—now I *am* in for it. This is "A Regular Fix," and no mistake! (*suddenly*) Egad! I have it! (*aloud and with apparent excitement*) *My* dear friend! *my* dear friend. No, sir! I disclaim him—I cast Brick off—I mean Flick—no, Quick, at once, and for ever.

CHARLES. Why, why?

DE B. Why? (*grasping* CHARLES's *arm*) Because he's your rival!—because he dares to love your charming—(*feeling in his pocket*) your adorable— (*aside*) Where *is* my book? (*finds it, and opens it behind him*) your incomparable Deborah—no, I mean Emily!

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CHARLES. Indeed! (*savagely, and buttoning up his coat*)

Enter ABEL QUICK, C. *and down* L.

(*walking up to* QUICK *and confronting him—then crossing his arms*) Sir!

QUICK. (L.) Sir!

CHARLES. (C.) So, sir!

QUICK. So, sir!

CHARLES. In a word, Mr. Quick—your attentions to Miss Emily are improper, sir—highly improper, sir—they have even excited the indignation of one, who was once your friend—your dear friend— (*pulling* DE BRASS *towards him*, R., *by the coat tail*) but who now disowns you—disclaims you—don't you? (*trying to turn* DE BRASS *round towards* QUICK)

DE B. (R., *keeping his face turned away*) I do—I don't know him—I won't know him—I won't even look at him! (*with pretended emotion, and hiding his face in his handkerchief*)

QUICK. (L., *to* CHARLES) Hark you, sir!—I'll not be dictated to by you, or any man alive! I love Miss Emily! —there! I adore Miss Emily!—there!

DE B. (*clapping his shoulder*) Bravo!

CHARLES. Then I'll have satisfaction!

DE B. (*clapping his shoulder*) Stick to that!

CHARLES. This very day!
QUICK. This very hour! } (DE BRASS *encouraging them*)

CHARLES. This very minute!—come along!

(CHARLES *and* QUICK *hurry towards* C.)

DE B. (R, *aside*) Wheugh! Come, I've got rid of them at last!

CHARLES. (*suddenly stopping*) Holloa!—how about seconds?

QUICK. Very true—how about seconds?

CHARLES. (*coming down and putting his arm under* DE BRASS'S, R.) Here's *my* second!

QUICK. (*taking* DE BRASS'S *other arm*, L.) And here, sir, is mine!—come along!

DE B. No, no, no! I object! (*struggling*)

CHARLES. Nonsense! (*taking up hat off the chair by door*, C., *and putting it on* DE BRASS'S *head—it is much*

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too large for him) There's your hat! Now—forward! (*they hurry* DE BRASS *out between them at* C. *in spite of his struggles, &c.*)

Enter EMILY *at door,* L. 1 E.; MRS. SURPLUS, *at door,* R. 1 E.; *and* MRS. CARTER *at door,* R. 3 E. *They all run in hurriedly, and alarmed at the same moment.*

MRS. S.
EMILY. (R.) } Mercy on us! What can be the matter?
MRS. C.

MRS. C. (C., *running to door in* C., *and looking off*) Oh! Madam! Oh, Miss! if there isn't Mr. Charles and Mr. Quick dragging a strange gentleman between them, along the passage, by the hair of his head!

MRS. S. (L., *aside, and coquettishy*) A strange gentleman! Can it be the pale interesting youth who upset the lobster salad in my lap at the supper table last night from excess of emotion?

(*a great noise of voices, &c., heard without, from* CHARLES, QUICK, *and* DE BRASS, C.)

MRS. C. Mercy on us! there 'll be murder, as sure as my name's Deborah! (*a loud crash heard*) Ah! there they go down in a lump, all a-top of one another!

MRS. S. Ah! (*falls fainting in a chair,* L. C.)

EMILY. Ah! (*falls fainting in another chair,* R.)

MRS. C. (*looking first at one, and then at the other up* L. C.) Ah! (*drops into another chair*)

Enter DE BRASS *hurriedly at* C., *without his hat, and his clothes in disorder—his coat half off his shoulders.*

DE B. Wheugh! a pretty state I am in, I've lost my hat! I think my head's all right! (*feeling his head*) Yes! (*seeing* EMILY) Holloa! (*turning and seeing* DEBORAH) Holloa! two of 'em.

EMILY. (*starting up, runs to* DE BRASS, R., *and grasping his arm*) Tell me! Mr. Quick——

MRS. C. (*starting up, running to* DE BRASS, L., *and grasping his other arm*) Speak! Mr. Charles——

DE B. Don't be alarmed. They were about to leave the house, to massacre one another, when I rushed to the

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door—shut it—bolted it—locked it—and here's the latch key. (*pulling an enormous door key out of his pocket*)

EMILY. Thanks! thanks! *Rushes out at* C.

MRS. C. Bless you! bless you!

About to run, stops, throws her arms suddenly round DE BRASS'S *neck, and then runs out after* EMILY, C.

DE B. Wheugh! a pretty squeak I had of it!—one foot over the threshold, and Pounce would have been down upon me like a hawk! What the devil's to be done now? I've offended old Surplus, I've set his nephew and his head clerk by the ears, and unless something turns up—(*goes up towards window, and coming down again,* L., *sees* MRS. SURPLUS *still in the chair*) Holloa! another of 'em!

MRS. S. (L. C., *rising suddenly, grasps* DE BRASS'S *arm, hurries him violently down, then in a loud whisper*) Rash imprudent youth, fly!—fly this fatal spot, ere my infuriated husband, maddened by devouring jealousy, lays you a mangled victim at his feet!

DE B. (L., *after a quiet look at her*) She's raving mad! (*aloud*) But, my dear madam—(*gradually beating a retreat*)

MRS. S. (*darting after him and again seizing him by the arm*) Do you think I do not recognise those features?—Hush! (*listening*) there's yet time to escape! Fly!—fly!—in pity, in mercy to the distracted Evelina Jane!

DE B. She's very mad indeed! I'd better try the soothing system, and encourage the poor old soul.

Here SURPLUS *appears from* R. *door,* DE BRASS *throwing himself into an attitude, and looking at* MRS. SURPLUS *with intense admiration*)

Oh! Evelina Jane——

SURP. (*rushing forward,* R.) Bravo! bravo!

MRS. S. (C.) Ah! (*screams and falls into* DE BRASS'S *arms*)

SURP. (*furiously to* DE BRASS, *who has evidently great difficulty in supporting* MRS. SURPLUS) Now, sir, I've found you out, have I?—with your cock-and-bull story about George the Second, Jeremiah in the middle, uncle Benjamin, up goes the income tax, and aunt Sally!—when your real object in coming here was to make love to my wife!

DE B. Your wife! I deny it!

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SURP. Deny it! when you've actually got her in your arms!

DE B. What, Evelina Jane!—I presume then, sir, you don't like it!

SURP. Of course not, sir!

DE B. No more do I—so take her! (*throwing* MRS. SURPLUS *into* SURPLUS's *arms*)

MRS. S. (*tenderly, to* SURPLUS) Oh, Barnaby!

SURP. Don't Barnaby me! Go to your room, madam! this instant, madam! (*dragging* MRS. SURPLUS, *and making her enter room at* R., *then advancing hurriedly to* DE BRASS, *and facing him*) Now, sir!—explain, sir!—this moment, sir!

DE B. (*quietly, sits,* C.) Oh, you want me to begin again—very well. Amidst the gathering thunder-clouds—

SURP. (R.) Pshaw! there's only thing to be done, sir, we must fight.

DE B. (L. C., *starting up*) With all my heart! (*coolly tucking back his sleeves*) Come on! (*sparring, and skipping about* SURPLUS)

SURP. Zounds! be quiet!—I mean—sir, you must give me instant satisfaction—so follow me! (*going up,* C.)

DE B. Ah, Barnaby! my dear Barnaby! (*going up*) Is that your carriage drawn up close to the door? Here's a chance for me! By pulling down the blinds, I may give Pounce the slip! (*rushing up to* SURPLUS) Come along, Barnaby! come along, I say! (*pulling* SURPLUS *towards door,* C.)

Enter CHARLES, SURPLUS, *and* ABEL QUICK, C.

CHARLES. (*to* DE BRASS) Now, sir!

DE B. (*jumping round and squaring at* CHARLES) I'm ready! come on!

CHARLES. Pshaw! Do you see this, sir? (*producing a hat which he has been holding behind him*)

DE B. (C.) I do, distinctly.

CHARLES. (I. C.—*slowly, and with emphasis*) It's a hat—it's a hat!

DE B. (*ditto*) You don't say so.

CHARLES. *Your* hat, colonel!

DE B. Colonel!

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CHARLES. Yes; I've discovered you! Inside your hat—look there, sir! (*pointing to inside of hat*) "Colonel Agamemnon Wallop!"

DE B. (*aside*) Here's a chance for me! (*aloud*) Well, I don't say I'm not Colonel Wallop—do I?

SURP. (R.) But I do! I know the colonel, well!

CHARLES. (L.) Then who are you? You say you've business with my uncle—there he is!

SURP. (R.) You say you want to consult my nephew—there he is!

QUICK. (*at back of* DE BRASS) You say I'm your dear old friend—here I am!

SURP. }
CHARLES. } Speak! (*vociferating together*)
QUICK. }

DE B. I will! but—(*mysteriously*) you'll keep my secret—you'll not betray me! (*solemnly*) Swear it! on your hats!—I mean, your honours.

SURP. }
CHARLES. } (*after consulting together*) We do!
QUICK. }

DE B. Then listen! (*short pause, then*) Amidst the gathering thunder clouds——

SURP. Pshaw! leave the house!

CHARLES. }
QUICK. } Yes! out with him!

(*they seize* DE BRASS, *and are hurrying him towards* C., *in spite of his struggles*)

Enter EMILY, *running*, R.

EMILY. (R.) What is the matter?

DE B. (*up*, C.—*aside, and suddenly*) Here's another chance! It's a forlorn hope—but never mind. (*aloud*) Unhand me! (*bursts from them, and runs down to* EMILY *—gazes intently at her—then looks at his memorandum book behind him*) Deborah—I mean, Emily, look at me! Behold this manly bosom, swelling with agitation! Doesn't all-powerful nature——? Yes, I see it does—then thus I throw off the mask—my child!

EMILY. (R.) Ah!

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DE B. (C.) Embrace your long-lost mother—father.

EMILY. Ah! (*runs and throws herself into* DE BRASS'S *arms*)

DE B. (*looking up*) Who wouldn't be a father!

SURP. (*aside, coming down,* R.) Hang it, I can't stand this—the truth must out! (*aloud, putting* EMILY *across to* R.) Sir, your cool barefaced effrontery forces from me a secret that I have locked up for more than eighteen years; in a word, I am Emily's father!

DE B. (*aside*) The devil!

CHARLES. } (*both up stage*) You?
QUICK. }

EMILY. (*running into Surplus's arms*) You?

SURP. Yes, my dear child—all shall be explained; but, not a word to Mrs. Surplus! And *now*, sir, what have you to say for yourself?

CHARLES. } Yes, sir—now what have you to say for
QUICK. } yourself?

DE B. I've made a mistake—that's all; it's a thing of daily occurrence; you can't take up a newspaper without seeing it. *A* fancies himself B's father, when suddenly up starts *C*, and then—— but you know all about it.

SURP. I'll soon know all about *you*, my fine fellow! (*running to* C., *pulling bell violently, and shouting*) Mrs. Carter!

CHARLES. Within, there!

MRS. SURPLUS, MRS. CARTER, HOUSEMAIDS, MEN SERVANTS, PORTERS, *&c. &c., run on from* C.

SMILER. (*without*) I tell you I saw him at the window, and I will come in. (*appears at door,* C., *struggling with* SERVANT, *and comes in to* DE BRASS) So I have found you at last, sir, have I!

DE B. (R. C., *with pretended astonishment*) Ah, Smiler, delighted to see you! (*aside*) Do the thing as quietly as you can.

SMILER. (L. C.) What thing?

DE B. Why—(*touching himself on the left shoulder*) I don't want to arrest you.

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DE B. You don't?

SMILER. Not I.

DE B. (*bullying*) Then get out of the house this moment!

SMILER. Not till I've told you the glorious news! Your cousin——

DE B. What cousin?—thirteen times removed?

SMILER. Yes—sudden fit of gout (*pathetically*)

DE B. Where? not there? (*giving* SMILER *a violent slap in the stomach*)

SMILER. Yes—and you step into the Baronetcy and £7,000 a year.

SURP.
MRS. S.
CHARLES.
EMILY.
QUICK.
MRS. C.
} A Baronet and £7,000 a year!

DE B. (*with pretended solemnity*) Virtue is its own reward!

SURP. Then why all this mystery!

OMNES. —Yes—why—why all this mystery?

DE B. Mr. Surplus, Mrs. Surplus, and the rest of the Royal Family—I mean of *this* family I feel that you are entitled to a full, clear, and satisfactory explanation; and you shall have it. (*beckons them all close to him—dead silence*) Listen! Amidst the gathering thunder-clouds—

(*the Curtain falls quickly*)

PORTER.

MRS. S. SURP. CHAS. DE B. SMILER. ABEL. EMILY. MRS. C. MRS. J

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Timour, Cream of all Tartars (b)
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CUT OFF WITH A SHILLING.

A COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

BY

S. THEYRE SMITH,

AUTHOR OF

A Happy Pair; Which is Which? My Uncle's Will, &c.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
PUBLISHER,
89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON
PUBLISHERS,
28, WEST 23RD STREET.

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CUT OFF WITH A SHILLING.

First performed at the Prince of Wales Theatre (under the management of Miss Marie Wilton), on Easter Monday, April 10th, 1871.

Characters.

GAYTHORNE ...	... Mr. H. W. MONTGOMERY
COLONEL BERNERS ...	... Mr. CHARLES COLLETTE.
KITTY GAYTHORNE ...	... Miss CARLOTTA ADDISON.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION, 45 MINUTES

MODERN COSTUMES

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CUT OFF WITH A SHILLING.

SCENE.—*A Breakfast Room in a Sea side Lodging House. Large window*, C., *opening on to sea-side view; a door on one side; table with breakfast laid.*

Enter SAM *and* KITTY *arm-in-arm through window.*

KITTY. But is my hair dry, Sam, darling?

SAM. (*touching it*) Dry as a bone, Kitty; dry as a mummy, my love, or as Miss Packerton's new novel.

KITTY. Don't compare my hair to that wretched book, sir.

SAM. Hard lines on you certainly, for your hair is all from your own head, and her book is the greater part of it from other people's. Your hair is perfectly original, whereas her novel is a kind of literary chignon, stolen from the dead, worked up into an unnatural shape, and supported by puffs. But still they're alike in both being perfectly dry; so, off with your hat, and, Venus having risen from the sea, let's have some breakfast.

KITTY. (*taking off her hat before glass*) I've had the grandest bathe. Did you see me swim, Sam?

SAM. (*opening newspaper*) Not to my knowledge, Kitty?

KITTY. You didn't! Why I thought you were watching me.

SAM. So I was.

KITTY. And you didn't see me swim! Why, I swam ten strokes.

SAM. With how many feet on the ground? Come, honour bright, now.

KITTY. (*defiantly*) Why not—not—(*coaxingly*)—not more than one, Sam.

SAM. Ah! I thought so. Women were "deceivers ever, one foot in sea, and one on shore, to one thing——" Well, I never! (*starting, and staring at newspaper*)

KITTY. What, Sam? What is it?

SAM. Ha, ha, ha! This is capital! Ha, ha!

KITTY. What is? Tell me, please. (*pettishly*) Now, Sam, tell me.

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SAM. Tell you! I can't for laughing. Read that. (*holding out newspaper*)

KITTY. Read what? (*taking paper*)

SAM. Why, that marriage.

KITTY. Which? The top one?

SAM. Yes, the top one: the tip-top one.

KITTY. (*reads*) "On the 15th instant, at St. George's, Hanover Square, by the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bullock-Smithy, assisted by the Reverend O. Fyddel, D.D., cousin of the bride, Alexander George Pursechoyle, late Captain, Royal Marine Mounted Rifles, to Clementina Belinda Letitia, eldest daughter of Ambrose Cronyon, of Blarney-le-Towers, Esquire, and niece of the Right Honourable the Earl of Chateau-Gammon."

SAM. "Deeply regretted," eh? Do they add that?

KITTY. Of course not. "No cards." But, Sam——

SAM. Ah! "Friends will kindly take this intimation." Ha, ha! I know one friend who won't take it kindly at all; and that's my uncle Joe.

KITTY. What, your uncle, the colonel of volunteers?

SAM. Yes, Colonel Berners, First Diddlesex. Ha, ha! If his conversation is ordinarily all guns and swords, what on earth will it be now? I wonder whether this business has had anything to do with his not answering my letter announcing our marriage. (*aside*) She doesn't know yet how much depends on it.

KITTY. Perhaps your uncle is out of town at present, Sam: gone on some volunteering expedition, very likely.

SAM. Possible. He's mad about volunteers, and seldom misses a review.

KITTY. Or he may be ill, you know, darling; seriously.

SAM. Perhaps. She always looks on the bright side of things, bless her!

KITTY. But, Sam, dear, I hope there was nothing in the tone of your letter to offend him. What did you say to him?

SAM. Everything that was kind and affectionate, my love; addressed him as my very dear uncle; hoped he was quite well; referred to the exceeding kindness which I had always had from him; mentioned that my happiness for life depended on my marrying Miss Kitty Frampton; (*she makes an affectionate demonstration with her hands, and kisses him*) stated that I had the best reasons for supposing that my feelings were reciprocated by the lady in question; (*she kisses him*) as we were to be married two hours after the time of writing, assured him that I could not take such a step without first informing him of it; begged him to direct his reply to my chambers in town, and it would be forwarded to any place

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where we might decide to stop; and concluded by signing myself his most affectionate nephew, Sam—*most* affectionate, you'll observe. Now, after such a letter, could his displeasure continue?

KITTY. But is he displeased, Sam?

SAM. Well, you see he was always impressing upon me that I had a right to look high; and in fact he—he wanted me to marry this very Miss Cronyon, who being over six feet in her stockings, would have necessitated my looking high indeed.

KITTY. Wanted you to marry—oh! (*bashfully playing with the button of his coat*) Was she nice looking, Sam, this tall Miss Cronyon?

SAM. Well Kitty, as well as I could make out at that distance, she rather ran to colour. It was rather the "Gules, two cheek bones rampant" order of countenance to say the truth, and I hate your over-coloured women.

KITTY. Then I suppose she was rich, Sam?

SAM. Yes, she'd any quantity of money.

KITTY. And of course the colour of that was quite unexceptionable, eh? (*slyly*)

SAM. Faith, yes! though I am told very few people ever saw the colour of it.

KITTY. And she was highly born too, Sam?

SAM. Yes, there was nothing to object to in her birth except that, as regards her own particular case, it might have been more recent by ten years or so with advantage.

KITTY. (*clapping her hands*) Sam!

SAM. Well?

KITTY. Sam! (*whispering in his ear*)

SAM. Eh! you conceited little witch, you. Fancy your cutting out the niece of an Earl, do you say? Pooh! she didn't care a straw for me, and I—I had other views, which I am sorry to say, my uncle——

KITTY. Never mind, you darling. As long as we love each other like this, what does it matter what your uncle or any one else thinks? We shall still have something to live for.

SAM. Perhaps, but we shall have absolutely nothing to live on.

KITTY. Nothing to live on! (*very seriously*) You're only joking, Sam?

SAM. Of course, my love. (*aside*) No, I daren't tell her yet. (*aloud*) Joking, of course. We can live upon love, can't we? We'll kill Cupid and cook him, and you shall have the liver-wing. (*jumping up*) But, pooh! all this because the postman is late. We shall have the letter directly. My uncle's a brick, and no mistake! The post at Westerton-super-Mare varies with the tides—now forward with the spring, now back-

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ward with the neap. All owing to the postman's being more than half an idiot, and of course, liable like the ocean, to lunar influences. Stay! by Jove, there he is now! (*going to window*) Hi!

KITTY. Who, Sam?

SAM. The wandering lunatic attached to the Westerton Post Office. (*calling*) Here, I say! (*standing at window, and calling off*) Postman! (*to her*) Deaf too, this functionary. I said he was short of senses. (*calling*) Here! anything for me? Mr. Gaythorne—(*louder*) Mr. Gaythorne. Is there—? Ah, thanks! You're late this morning, ain't you? A review, eh? What? Oh! volunteers, is it? What time? Twelve o'clock, eh! Thanks! Good morning! (*coming forward*) Twelve! It's not ten yet. Heaps of time. We'll go and have a look at it, eh, Kitty? Ah! (*tearing open cover*) The avuncular fist, by Jove! Here we are, my pet. Why—by George!—why (*feeling letter*) there's money in it. Feel. Don't you feel it? What on earth——

KITTY. But open it, darling; open it.

SAM. Here goes then. (*opening letter—a shilling falls on the floor*) What's that?

KITTY. (*picking it up*) A shilling, Sam. What a funny old gentleman your uncle must be.

SAM. (*uneasily*) So he is—so he is. The playfullest old—old demon. Though why the dickens he's playing tricks with the currency in this fashion, I cannot say.

KITTY. Then why don't you look, Sam? (*jokingly*) Do you think it's right to keep your wife on thorns in this way, sir?

SAM. (*laughing uneasily*) Why, considering we married under the rose, Kitty, it's not so inappropriate. (*glancing at letter*) Gad! I thought as much. (*letting letter fall and throwing himself into chair*)

KITTY. What? (*taking up letter*) May I look, Sam?

SAM. Oh! by all means, though you've (*looking at shilling*) picked up the drift of it already.

KITTY. (*reads*) "Dear Sam, I am a man of my word. I told you that if you married without my consent, you would receive from me the sum of one shilling sterling, and no more."

SAM. Mark the satire in the "sterling!"

KITTY. (*reads*) "Your letter informs me that you have done so. I enclose the shilling, and am, yours truly—Joseph Berners. P.S. The weather is fine but cool."

SAM. Ha, ha! That's his satire again. Didn't I say he was the playfullest old fiend——

KITTY. But what does he mean—if there's any meaning in it?

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SAM. Oh, there's meaning enough in it. Never knew three lines and a shilling mean so much in all my life before.

KITTY. (*rather coldly*) Then please explain, Sam.

SAM. (*in an embarrassed way*) Explain! What could be clearer? He tells me distinctly that he cuts me off with a shilling: disinherits me. There you have it in black and white, and here, that there may be no mistake (*tossing shilling on table*) in white alone.

KITTY. Well, it's very cruel of him; but, if he chooses to be offended with you, why should you wish for any more of his money?

SAM. Why!—why because, though no doubt this is a very good shilling as shillings go, yet as they go so fast, it might perhaps be convenient to have a few more of them. Twenty of them go to a pound, you know, and where all the pounds go to I've never been able to discover yet.

KITTY. But your own fortune which you told me about, and your town house, and your country house which you described to me?

SAM. Faith, yes. (*shrugging his shoulders*) I'd a very fine property in the air in those days certainly, and as I was making love to a girl next door to an angel, it was scarcely inappropriate to boast of my possessions in that element. (*impatiently*) Hang it, Kitty! Can't you see that all this depended on my uncle's good pleasure?

KITTY. And so, Sam—Mr. Gaythorne—did you not represent yourself to me as a man of fortune?

SAM. I told you that I had expectations; I've been deceived, that's all.

KITTY. No, that is not all, for I have been deceived as well.

SAM. How was I to know that my uncle was such a brute?

KITTY. You ought to have known that he was a brute. Isn't he your own relation? You have deceived me, sir, deceived me from the first. Everything you represented to me, everything you promised me, has turned out false. You promised me that I should have ten bridesmaids when I was married, and I had to put up with an old pew-opener woman of eighty. You promised me that we should run away in a carriage of four with postilions, and after all we went in a hansom to a railway station. You told me that it was your uncle's gout which prevented his seeing me before our marriage; I don't believe that he ever had gout in his life.

SAM. You don't! Why it's in the family. He inherited it from his father. I shall have it some day, I suppose.

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Ha, ha! A shilling and the family gout my sole inheritance! Ha, ha!

KITTY. You're a false, heartless, cruel——

SAM. Bless my soul, Mrs. Gaythorne, this is rather too much! You seem to forget that if my prospects have been ruined, it is you that have ruined them. Before I married you I was a rich man, my uncle's acknowledged heir. I marry you, and, gad! he turns away and hands me a shilling, as if—confound his insolence!—as if I were a beggar!

KITTY. Well, and aren't you?

SAM. Thank you, Mrs. Gaythorne.

KITTY. Not at all. You've only yourself to thank for it. It's shameful! (*as he takes his hat and goes towards door*) Where are you going, Mr. Gaythorne?

SAM. Going to—see the tide come in.

KITTY. The tide come in! Why it was high tide an hour ago. Where are you going? Won't you have any breakfast?

SAM. No, thanks. This morning's experiences have rather put me off my feed.

KITTY. But—but you'll make yourself ill if you don't mind.

SAM. Well, but so long as you don't mind, what does that matter.

KITTY. (*in a vexed tone*) What do you mean? To go out in that way without eating anything, is the way to kill yourself, you——

SAM. Kill myself, ha, ha! Might do worse than that, perhaps. Happy thought,—ha, ha! Kill myself, eh? By gad, ah! *Exit by door.*

KITTY. (*uneasily*) No, but—Mr. Gaythorne! (*anxiously*) Sam! (*desperately*) Sam, darling, forgive me! I'm very sorry—I didn't mean—(*with a scream*) Sam! (*as if to follow him, then stopping*) No, it is not I that am wrong—it is I that have been wronged. Let him come to me, I know he can't keep away long. If I was a little put out at learning so suddenly that he was worth nothing at all, instead of having two houses and ever so much a year, wasn't it quite natural? I married him for love, of course; but he might have excused a little impatience when love had the bandage torn so very abruptly from its eyes. But, men are so vain, so selfish. They think that as long as we have them, rich or poor, it's all the same to us; that while they do us the honour of loving us, we don't care for anything else. How absurd! how conceited! how—how true! My darling! I don't care what he's cut off with. I have given him all my heart; but, if ever I meet that dreadful uncle of his, I'll give him—some of my mind.

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Enter COLONEL BERNERS, *hurriedly, through open window, which he closes hastily, and looks through.*

Ah! (*listening without turning round*) I said he'd come back. (*a pause*) Why doesn't he say something? (*turning quickly*) My dar—— (*starting*) Oh! it isn't he.

BERN. (*perceiving her*) I beg ten thousand pardons, ma'am, ten thousand pardons, (*glancing out of window*) for trespassing on your privacy in this way, but—(*looking out*) If strangers are to be hunted through the streets of this town by wild bulls—(*looking out*) Ah! up goes another old woman: that's three—the inhabitants must not be surprised if—(*looking out and then turning*) It's gone to the chemist's—not be surprised if strangers do behave in rather an unceremonious fashion occasionally. (*looking out*) Ha, ha! I knew it would call at the china shop.

KITTY. (*anxiously*) Is there anything the matter? What—what is it?

BERN. A mad bull, ma'am: a prize mad bull I should say, by the size of it.

KITTY. A bull! Where?

BERN. In the china shop at present, ma'am. (*looking out*) Stay! no, it's come out. There! it's gone to the dentist's. I knew it was mad!

KITTY. I really scarcely understand this——

BERN. This intrusion! Surely I've made it clear. I was pursued by an infuriated bull, ma'am. The horns of the enraged beast were on the point of operating on my coat tails—that is, were threatening my rear guard, when I fortunately spied this open window. I made an echelon movement, swung round my right flank, pivoting on my left, and effected a lodgment in your apartment. Regarding it in the light of neutral territory, ma'am, with your permission I will lay down my arms for a moment. (*depositing his umbrella and field glasses on table, and wiping his brow*)

KITTY. Pray rest yourself. Be seated, please; as your flight seems to have——

BERN. Call it a retreat, ma'am—a retreat for strategical reasons. It was merely a retreat, though necessarily a rapid one, as the enemy debouched from a slaughter-house with alarming suddenness.

KITTY. Did everyone else run away—that is, retreat, sir?

BERN. Yes, ma'am; the movement was effected with equal promptness and unanimity.

KITTY. You didn't—you didn't meet a gentleman as you came here, did you? (*anxiously*)

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BERN. I met no one, madam, gentle or simple. The entire population was going my way.

KITTY. Then did you *see* a gentleman just before you took refuge in this house?

BERN. You couldn't describe his back, could you, ma'am?

KITTY. He's tall and very graceful; and his back is a model for a sculptor.

BERN. Ah! Could you be a little more definite? Not being a sculptor, you see, I——

KITTY. Well, he's very graceful, sir——

BERN. (*thoughtfully*) Ah, then I don't think I——

KITTY. And there's a look of coolness and courage about him, that——

BERN. Then I'm certain I didn't see him. If he couldn't adapt himself to circumstances like the rest of us, he certainly was not present.

KITTY. Do you mean by adapting himself to circumstances running away, may I ask?

BERN. I mean—a—retreating, ma'am; with more or less expedition, retreating.

KITTY. Then I agree with you that he can't have been there. He would certainly not have adapted himself to circumstances in that fashion. My husband is a stranger to fear.

BERN. Is he? Gad! he should get a bull to introduce him. Then it is your husband, madam, that you're enquiring after?

KITTY. (*half crying*) Oh! yes, yes. I'm—I'm—I don't know where he's gone, and I'm—I'm very uneasy, sir.

BERN. (*aside*) I say what does this mean? Sounds as if this dauntless husband had run away after all—effecting a retreat, that is, for connubial reasons. H'm! (*looking at her critically*) a remarkably nice-looking girl. Sabre me! if she isn't an extraordinary pretty girl. I'm curious about her. (*aloud*) You appear to be in some distress, ma'am. If I can be of any assistance to you, you may command me: command me as if you were the duke himself. I shall be proud to put all my forces at your disposal: horse, foot, and marines, ma'am: lock, stock and barrel, by gad!

KITTY. You are very good, but ——.

BERN. Never mind the "but." Come! I don't want to be curious, but you and your husband have had a little tiff, eh?—a mere out-post affair, no doubt; and he's drawn off, isn't it so?—leaving you mistress of the—the *champ de bataille*, eh? Of course, of course. These little things happen every day.

KITTY. You're quite wrong. It never happened before.

BERN. Not with you—of course not—not with you and your husband, because you've only been married a month or so.

KITTY. A month! We've only been married a week.

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BERN. (*aside*) I thought as much. The honeymoon in its first quarter, begad! (*aloud*) A week! Then he'll be back in ten minutes, in ten minutes at the outside, and I'd wager anything he'll bring with him the very thing that you had your little argument about, if it is to be bought in the whole town.

KITTY. I didn't want him to buy anything. And he hasn't any money to buy it with if I did.

BERN. (*aside*) Hallo, hallo! (*aloud*) No money! Ah! I dare say you're right. A man who marries an heiress mustn't expect to have it all his own way.

KITTY. An heiress! I! You never were more mistaken. The only portion I brought to my husband was my love.

BERN. Nothing but love—whew! Ah! it's wonderful how soon married people run through that sort of property, when there's nothing more substantial behind.

KITTY. There ought to have been plenty more substantial behind only, only a brute——

BERN. Ay, ay! So you've married a man without a sixpence?

KITTY. Pardon me! I've married a man with two.

BERN. With two!

KITTY. Yes; he's—(*sobs*) he's cut off with them.

BERN. Cut off with them—absconded with your entire fortune! Shameful! You may well call him a brute, my dear young lady.

KITTY. I call him a brute! (*rises*) How dare you say so, sir?

BERN. I beg ten thousand pardons; but I thought you mentioned a brute.

KITTY. Well, if I did! A woman may talk of a brute without meaning her husband, I suppose.

BERN. No doubt, no doubt. Such a case might occur.

KITTY. Am I right in supposing you are an unmarried man, sir?

BERN. (*rising*) We are both right, ma'am; you in supposing me unmarried, and I in being so.

KITTY. Nay, nay; unmarried people are ignorant of what true happinesss is.

BERN. Their ignorance is such bliss, ma'am, that it would be folly to be wise.

KITTY. Ah, no! Wisdom is always better than ignorance.

BERN. Pardon my saying, madam, that in my view the wisdom which a man gains by marriage, is the wisdom which showeth him that he is a fool. I refer of course to what are called love-matches: mere matches of sentiment. It is a different thing with marriages where prudence has been first consulted. They are reasonable enough. The relatives of the parties meet; questions of property are considered, settlements drawn up, marriage follows, and——

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KITTY. And the love, sir; where does that come?

BERN. The love! Oh! that comes afterwards.

KITTY. Comes afterwards! And do you call such love as that legitimate love?

BERN. Legitimate! Of course—isn't it born in wedlock?

KITTY. I am surprised to hear a soldier speak of love in such terms as that.

BERN. (*much flattered*) A soldier! Bayonet me! She's a charming woman! (*aside*)

KITTY. But—(*rising and walking to window*) Pray excuse my uneasiness. I cannot think what has become—Oh! to whom can I turn for advice?

BERN. Turn to me, ma'am. (*aside*) A charming woman, as I'm a—a soldier! (*aloud*) Turn to me. I'm not a married man, certainly, but none the less able perhaps to give advice as to a matrimonial difficulty. A general conducting a battle must keep himself aloof from the strife. Now, ma'am. (*sitting in an attitude of attention*) You speak to sympathising ears, I assure you. Now, ma'am. Forwards!

KITTY. Well, you look so kind and sympathising that—but if you're to understand it properly I must tell you the whole story, and you must fancy yourself in my position from the first, you know.

BERN. I'll do my best, ma'am. Right shoulders forward—march!

KITTY. Fancy yourself, then, a girl at a boarding school.

BERN. (*starting*) Halt! (*as if after an effort*) Well?

KITTY. Fancy that you had constantly met, and at last fallen in love with—I mean at first, you know—fallen in love with the dearest, handsomest, charmingest man in the world. Now can you fancy that?

BERN. Easily; for it was nothing but fancy.

KITTY. He was, though! All the girls said so. And he chose me out of them all!

BERN. I can quite fancy that.

KITTY. (*bashfully*) Well, what could I do, you know? It was so flattering, and he was so attentive, and he went on so with notes and bouquets and all that——

BERN. Ay, ay! I can fancy all that.

KITTY. Till at last I—I used to meet him just out of bounds, you know, with two girls on the wall, to——

BERN. I know, mounted vedettes; just so.

KITTY. Yes, and he talked of his love and his property; and his town house and his country house, and all that, till I—till I consented to run away with him.

BERN. Ay, ay! the old story, "So runs the world away."

KITTY. So early one morning I stole out of my room, and

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out of the house, while all the girls were fast asleep, and through the garden, and out at the back gate, and—and found myself in his arms, you know. Are you attending? Are you fancying yourself in my position?

BERN. H'm! for the moment I was fancying myself in his position. But it comes to the same thing. Go on.

KITTY. Well, we were married that morning, and came on here, and what do you think?

BERN. Why, what?

KITTY. Why, he's worth nothing at all! (*rising solemnly*)

BERN. Nothing at all! Break my centre! Nothing! Then he deceived you?

KITTY. He! No. He has been himself deceived, grossly deceived by a relative upon whom he had lavished a more than filial affection for years.

BERN. Deceived by a relation! (*rising and taking her hand*) I can sympathise with you, madam; I can sympathise with you and your husband, for I have also been deceived by a relation, a fellow, who, forgetting——

KITTY. Forgetting the tender affection which my husband had always treated him with, which no son, however devoted, could have exceeded; affection such as——

BERN. Such as not one father out of a hundred shows, and not one tithe of which did this ungrateful fellow deserve, he suddenly turned round with the blackest treachery, and without a thought for the grief and disappointment——

KITTY. Oh! With the very intention of inflicting this grief and disappointment—turned round and wrote a letter such as a tiger might have indited——

BERN. Or a hyena, laughing in its sleeve, might have penned, in which, under a thin veil of consideration and good manners——

KITTY. And with an affectation of justice that was simply profane. Oh, it was shameful, wasn't it?

BERN. Shameful! It was worse than shameful. But consider my case——

KITTY. And mustn't the man who could behave so be a brute? Mustn't he now?

BERN. Brute! Brute is too good a name for him. But look at me——

KITTY. And all for what?

BERN. For what, indeed? For a nasty, artful, scheming——

KITTY. All because of me—because he took an unreasoning dislike for me.

BERN. The monster! Dislike for you!

KITTY. (*with a coquettish glance*) Then you don't think I'm so repulsive, do you?

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BERN. I? Gad no, ma'am! It is from the other pole of the magnet that I suffer.

KITTY. You are too kind! Believe me, sir, such frank and generous sympathy from a perfect stranger has affected me most sensibly.

BERN. Don't call me a stranger, my dear young lady. Community in suffering makes rapid friendships. I feel as if I had known you for years.

KITTY. And you too have suffered from the ingratitude of a relation.

BERN. I have; from the detestable ingratitude of a fellow who was indebted to me for everything he had in the world; for the very clothes he wore, for his education, for his entrance into life——

KITTY. Entrance into life! Ah! your son. How terrible!

BERN. Son! I've been more than a father to him. And how does he repay me? After my squandering upon him the most lavish kindness, after my giving him all that the most beloved and petted son could expect from the most indulgent father, what does he do? Denies me his confidence in the most interesting event in his life—almost breaks the heart of a rich, well-born and beautiful girl whom I had selected for his wife, and marries a nasty little draggle-tailed chit with no more prospects than a London coal cellar.

Enter SAM, *silently, by window, catches sight of* BERNERS, *and slips behind curtain to listen.*

KITTY. Ah, the horrid creature! But she's pretty, I suppose; and a pretty face makes up for everything, you know.

BERN. Not when it's all made up itself, as hers is. Pretty! About as pretty as a Lowther Arcade doll! A little dowdy thing—short, dumpy, vapid! Not that I've ever seen her myself, but——

KITTY. (*surprised*) What! not seen her! How then can you judge of her appearance?

BERN. Oh! I know the sort of girl that would attract him—tell me the fish, I'll tell you the bait for it. He is insensible to true beauty, grossly insensible. When I selected for him a lady with the gait of an empress and the figure of a queen, with the blood of princes in her veins and the fortune of a prince in her pockets, he sneered at her as too tall, and because the blood of all her ancestors mantled in her countenance, ma'am, he compared her with disgusting ribaldry to a railway semaphore with a danger signal at the top.

KITTY. (*earnestly*) Was she so tall then, this lady?

BERN. Nothing to speak of—nothing unusual of the sort. Or if she was rather tall, supposing she was willing to stoop to a

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marriage with him, what did her height matter? No: the ungrateful rascal——

KITTY. Your son, do you mean?

BERN. Son! he's no son of mine, nor ever was for that matter. He was only my nephew to begin with, and now——

KITTY. (*uneasily*) Your nephew! Dear me!

BERN. Yes, but he's no nephew of mine for the future. I'll have nothing more to do with him. I've cast him off. I wrote and told him so: told him in so many words.

KITTY. (*with suppressed anxiety*) You wrote to him! Oh, wasn't it a difficult letter to write? What could you say?

BERN. Nothing more easy. I'll tell you what I said; I remember every word of it; it's simplicity itself. I said—now mark—I said, "Dear Sam——"

KITTY. (*with a great start*) "Dear Sam." (*aside*) There!

BERN. Too affectionate, you think. You think I ought to have said, "Dear Mr. Gaythorne," perhaps.

KITTY. "Mr. Gaythorne!" (*rising in much agitation*)

BERN. Why, what's the matter, ma'am?

KITTY. I—I'm uneasy about my husband, sir—seriously uneasy. (*aside*) Who could have thought!——

BERN. The normal condition of a wife, ma'am. Pray attend—"Dear Sam,—I am a man of my word."—So I am. Always mean what I say——

KITTY. (*aside*) And he called me a "draggle-tailed chit."

BERN. Pray attend, ma'am—"man of my word. I told you that if you married without my consent you should receive from me the sum of one shilling sterling, and no more. Your letter informs me that you have done so"—He had written to me, you understand——

KITTY. Yes; a beautiful letter.

BERN. What, ma'am? Beautiful?

KITTY. Don't I speak distinctly? Undutiful, I say. I suppose it was an undutiful letter.

BERN. Oh! I misunderstood you, ma'am. Undutiful! I should think so, most undutiful.

KITTY. What a dreadful story!

BERN. So it is; so it is. A dreadful story of ingratitude. But I was even with him. Pray attend to what follows—"informs me that you have done so. I enclose"—mark this, ma'am—"I enclose the shilling, and am"——

KITTY. (*losing patience*) A cruel, hard-hearted monster!

BERN. (*staring in astonishment*) Monster! Who?

KITTY. Why you—you—(*a sob*) wick—wick—wicked old man.

BERN. Bless my soul, I—where's my hat? I perceive, madam, that I have trespassed too long upon your kindness

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that I have taxed your—hem!—your politeness too far. Permit me to thank you very much for——

KITTY. No; pray don't go. Forgive me, please, for those hasty words. No! (*getting between him and the door*) I really won't let you go till you—nay, sir, I beg and entreat——

BERN. (*seizing his hat and umbrella, but leaving his glasses*) Good morning, madam; thanking you once more for your kindness. Nay, if a flank movement is necessary—(*turning suddenly towards sash window*) Good morning!

Exit, C. *off* L.—SAM *comes from behind curtain, goes to* C. *window, and watches* BERNERS *out of sight.*

KITTY. There! he's gone. Oh! my foolish—foolish tongue. And if I had only kept my temper and taken pains, I might perhaps have won him back for Sam, for he was more than half in love with me. I'm certain he was! And oh! what a triumph that would have been. But now—(SAM *comes down*) Oh! Sam, my darling, then you're come back. Oh! I've been so wretched, I could not think what had become of you.

SAM. What will become of me, you mean. There's nothing left for me as far as I can see but to 'list for a soldier, and as I've been cut of *with* one shilling to be cut off *for* another: to take the Queen's handsome offer, and so double our fortune at one stroke.

KITTY. Oh, don't talk in that dreadful way, Sam. If you had to go and fight I should die of terror.

SAM. Fight, Kitty! You don't suppose that being a soldier has anything to do with fighting, do you? Not a bit of it. Women, children and Englishmen are non-combatants now-a-days.

KITTY. Oh, Sam! you don't know what has happened since you went out? Your uncle's been here.

SAM. I know. I saw him.

KITTY. Did you? He said——

SAM. I know. I heard him.

KITTY. And I said——

SAM. Ay—ay—I heard that too.

KITTY. Then—then—oh, Sam, I'm so vexed with myself.

SAM. Are you? Then I never knew a married couple more thoroughly of one mind in my life before.

KITTY. You're vexed with me too, you mean.

SAM. Of course, as a husband, I am bound to share all my wife's vexations.

KITTY. But, my darling, I had no patience with him. (*crosses*, R.)

SAM. I know, my dear, I know. That's just how it struck me.

KITTY. I'm sure for some time I was as patient as a saint.

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SAM. So you were, my own, till suddenly you blazed up like a martyr.

KITTY. Then I wish you'd scold me well, Sam.

SAM. Where's the use, Kitty? If there were any chance of his coming back——

KITTY. Why, I declare he is coming back. Look!

SAM. Eh! So he is, what on earth's the meaning of this?

KITTY. I know. See! He's left his glasses. He's coming back for them, no doubt. What shall we do to detain him? Hide again, Sam, hide. I have it. There's nothing else to be done. I'll faint on them. I know how to do it. I have often fainted at Miss Lothrop's, and deceived them all down to to the doctor. Run away—quick! (*throws herself on sofa, the glasses under her*)

SAM. By Jove! She's not been to school for nothing. She's had a first-rate female education, evidently. Now then to cover. The enemy is forcing the outworks, as he'd express it himself. (*runs behind curtain*)

Enter COLONEL BERNERS *at window, C. from* L.

BERN. I deeply regret having to trouble you again, madam, with my—(*looking round*) with my presence; but I've left my —my field glasses. (*catching sight of her*) Bless me! What's the matter? Why she's fainted. Poor child! Madam! Madam! A dead faint, and no mistake. What's occasioned this, now? Can it have been my ill-timed anger that—— (*sitting on sofa beside her*) Oh, there are my glasses. But, hang it, I can't leave her in this state. Where's some water? (*taking some and sprinkling it on her face*) Gad, how pretty she is! Looks like an angel reposing, don't she? I wish she were an angel indeed, I'd burn some of her own feathers under her nose, and bring her to in that way. (*letting her hand drop*) I declare this looks serious. I must open a vein.

SAM. (*aside, looking out*) What—what does he say! I'll have no bloodshed!

BERN. (*feeling in breast pocket*) I never stir without a lancet.

SAM. (*aside*) But, hang it, I hope she'll stir without a lancet, or I must interfere.

BERN. (*pulling up sleeve of her dress*) What a lovely arm! Like marble, by Jove!

SAM. (*aside*) Ay, an arm after your own heart, isn't it, you stony-hearted old rascal!

BERN. Well, now for it! (*she sighs and raises her hand to her face*) Eh! Why she's coming to! (*in a tone of some disappointment*)

SAM. (*aside*) And I declare he's disappointed—the blood-thirsty old dog!

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KITTY. (*sighing*) Ah! Where am I?

BERN. Don't move; sit still. You'll be much better directly.

KITTY. (*turning her eyes on him in a weary way, and speaking slowly, in a low voice*) I'm afraid I've been very troublesome.

BERN. (*hastily*) Nothing of the sort—nothing of the sort.

KITTY. (*holding out her hand*) And you've been so very kind

BERN. Not a bit—not a bit. (*aside*) I'm rather glad I left my glasses. (*aloud*) How do you feel now, eh? Better, eh?

KITTY. Oh, I'm quite well again, thanks. I shall be none the worse for it. I've had fainting fits of this kind before, and they never do me any harm. (*with a smile as if at her own weakness*) It's not a real faint, you know.

SAM. (*aside*) Frank, by Jove!

BERN. Isn't it? It is, though. And though I hope it's nothing serious, yet I think you should take advice about it.

KITTY. Oh! it's nothing. It is not a case for medicine. I am so sorry for what I said just now. Will you forgive me?

BERN. Pooh—pooh! Of course. Nothing to forgive, my dear—nothing. (*aside*) I'm very glad I left my glasses.

KITTY. But I did pity those two poor things so.

BERN. What poor things?

KITTY. Why your nephew and—and niece, you know.

BERN. (*rising and speaking coldly*) You think I treated them cruelly, ma'am!

KITTY. Now you're getting angry again. Do sit down, and talk quietly. (*supplicatingly*) Now, please. (*he sits again*) It was very wrong of your nephew to treat you as he did, I quite allow.

SAM. (*aside*) That's right, don't spare me. I've got no friends.

BERN. (*angrily*) Wrong of him! why——

KITTY. (*firmly*) Yes, I say it was wrong of him; but, oh! if you would only let me be the peacemaker between you and your nephew, you don't know how much lighter my own sorrow would be.

BERN. For your own matter, my dear, don't let it trouble you. I shall make a point of seeing your relative who has treated you so heartlessly, and hope to bring him to a sense of the atrocity of his conduct. But as to that nephew of mine—think of the feelings of Miss Cronyon.

KITTY. Dear me! (*as if struck by the name*) Miss—Who? (*reaching newspaper*)

BERN. Miss Cronyon: the lady I intended him to marry: one of the Cronyon's, of Blarney-le-Towers. Think of that poor girl, nursing her broken heart, and concealing her lacerated affection in the shady groves of her ancestral home.

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KITTY. Ah the Groves of Blarney—what did you say the name was?

BERN. Blarney-le-Towers, County Cork. And you don't appear to sympathise with her at all. You can't feel for a woman, I suppose. Ha, ha! so like your sex, that.

KITTY. I keep my sympathy for those who need it.

BERN. And does not she need it, ma'am?

KITTY. You shall judge for yourself. (*holding out paper*) Look there! In the marriages. Do you see? (*pointing*) "On the 15th, by the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of—, assisted by the Reverend"—do you see? "Alexander George Pursechoyle, late Captain," and so on, "to Clementina Belinda Letitia, eldest daughter of Ambrose Cronyon, of Blarney-le-Towers, Esquire, and niece of the Right Honorable the Earl of Chateau-Gammon." Miss Cronyon, you see, of Blarney-le-Towers, Esquire. (*sweetly*) Is that your Miss Cronyon?

BERN. (*striking his thigh*) Gad! then I've been made a fool of.

KITTY. (*smiling*) Yes: so like your sex, that.

SAM. (*aside*) Ha, ha! that's one for him.

KITTY. But, there! Never mind Mrs. Pursechoyle, *née* Cronyon. She was evidently a deceitful thing, and your nephew is well rid of such a connection. His present wife wouldn't deceive you for the world, I'm sure—(*aside*) except for your good.

BERN. I should like to see her, ma'am. (*wrathfully*)

KITTY. Oh! he'll bring her to see you, of course, directly you send him word of your forgiveness.

BERN. Eh! you misunderstand me. Forgiveness! He gets no forgiveness from me.

KITTY. Not!

BERN. No, ma'am; no.

KITTY. Oh! then I misunderstood you, indeed. What a ridiculous mistake for me to make. I understood you to say that you were a man of your word. Absurd! ha, ha!

BERN. And do you think I am not a man of my word, m'am?

KITTY. How can I think so, when just now you told me that you could forgive your nephew everything except his treatment of that most needlessly pitied Miss Cronyon?

SAM. (*aside*) Well done, our side!

BERN. But I did not tell you that I could forgive the creature he has married—and husband and wife are one!

KITTY. Occasionally. But you own you've never seen her. Is this justice, now, to condemn without seeing?

BERN. Of course it is. Does not every statue of Justice tell you that? Oh! I could forgive *him*, but for that impertinent little flirt whom he has married—that obnoxious, ill-bred, ugly——

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KITTY. (*rising angrily*) Ugly, sir! I will not endure—that is, I beg you, out of consideration for me, not to use such terms as those in speaking of one of my sex. A woman cannot bear to hear a woman spoken of in such a way.

SAM. (*aside*) Unless she says it herself, I suppose.

BERN. I beg pardon, madam—I meant nothing offensive, I protest; least of all to you, ma'am. If the creature were anything like you—hem!

KITTY. Like me! Oh, I am sure Mrs.—what was the name? Ah! Gaythorne, was it not?—Mrs. Gaythorne is quite as pretty as I am. (*leaning back, and smiling at him*) Ah, I wish I were your niece.

BERN. (*glancing at her*) Do you, my dear, do you? (*aside*) I wish to goodness she was.

KITTY. (*smiling*) Yes, I do. (*after a moment's thought*) If I were your niece, and you made yourself disagreeable in this way, I'll tell you what I should do.

BERN. Disagreeable! Dis—— Well, what should you do?

KITTY. I should get an interview with you without your knowing who I was.

BERN. That would be impossible, to start with.

KITTY. Impossible! The easiest thing in the world. I'd be a governess enquiring for a situation, or a housemaid seeking a place; I'd be a lady after a servant's character, or a servant after a lady's; I'd be a Sister of Charity wanting subscriptions for a hospital; I'd be a blind beggar and a dog, but I'd see you somehow.

BERN. Well—well, suppose we grant that. What then?

KITTY. Well, in the first place I should make you look at me a good deal; and really, sir, after my experience of your society for the last half hour, I can't bring myself to believe that to effect that would be a matter of any difficulty.

BERN. (*with some embarrassment*) Well, ha, ha! No, ma'am, no—no, my dear. Ha, ha! perhaps not, my love.

KITTY. Well then, I should talk to you—you know, till you began rather to like me than otherwise. (*quickly*) Perhaps you'll say that's an impossibility.

BERN. By no means, my dear, the very contrary, begad!

KITTY. Then—then I should throw off the mask, and I should say:—"I am very sorry, uncle, that Sam married me without your consent, and against your wishes; I never dreamed when I listened to him that he was dependent upon you, and therefore bound to consider you in taking such a step." I should say—"I am a poor motherless girl, uncle, without any one in the world but Sam and—and—you. (*sobs*) Will you still cast off one who is quite innocent of any thought of offending you, and who would be—oh! so glad to love you dearly? (*sobs and sits on sofa with handkerchief to her eyes*)

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BERN. By George, madam, (*with great warmth*) if Sam had married you, I'd have—here give me a piece of writing paper—quick! I must give vent to my feelings at once. Quick! A piece of paper and a pen.

KITTY. (*setting writing materials before him*) Oh! how good of you—you will write to your nephew at once.

BERN. To my nephew! no. To that tiger-hearted relation of yours whose unreasonable anger would blast your future life. But I'll make it all right, my dear. You leave it to me. Now then his name and address. Quick! Who is he? Come—the scorpion's address.

KITTY. (*aside*) What shall I say? Oh! (*aloud*) I'll look for the address while you are writing the letter. Thanks, so much for your kindness.

BERN. Not a bit. Be quick! I shan't be long. I shall give it him short and sharp. (*beginning to write*) "Sir"—I'll give it him, front, flank, and rear. (KITTY *steals back to* SAM *and whispers to him—he to her*) What relation is he to your husband, my dear? (*without turning*)

KITTY. (*with a grimace of apprehension*) Uncle!

BERN. Uncle! The viper! (*writes*) I wonder how he'll like that, ha, ha! (*emphasizing his composition with violent motions of his head*)

KITTY. (*in a whisper to* SAM) I hope he'll put it very plainly, Sam.

SAM (*to her*) Little doubt of that. A man always tells the whole truth when talking to himself.

BERN. There! Now, my dear, an envelope, please. That's right. Now then, his name and address. (*ready to address envelope*)

KITTY. His name is——

BERN. Well! Out with it.

KITTY. His name is Colonel Berners!

(*a pause—he falls back in his chair, and simply stares—she neither moves nor looks up, but sits with the letter in her hand*)

BERN. (*with a gasp*) Colonel——

KITTY. (*without looking up*) Berners!—B, E, R—(*he rises and dashes the pen on table*) Isn't the pen a good one? (*rallying her courage*) Ah, I see, as a soldier you don't like a quill. Captain Sword of course prefers the steel, and scorns the white feather! (*looking up at last, and speaking firmly*) Try this one, Uncle Joseph.

BERN. So you are Sam's wife, madam!

KITTY. Yes, uncle.

BERN. And dare you look me in the face, ma'am, after—

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after playing upon me in this way! Why—why—turn my flank, madam——

KITTY. Well, haven't I, uncle Joseph?

BERN. So you've made a fool of me, have you?

KITTY. No, indeed. That was all your own doing.

BERN. I've made a fool of myself, that's to say. (*aside*) Begad she's right too. (*aloud*) But if you think such deceit as this will prosper, you are mistaken.

KITTY. Do you mean that I deceived you?

BERN. Why, do you deny it?

KITTY. Most certainly.

BERN. What? Did not you behave to me from the time I entered your house as if you'd no connection with me at all?

KITTY. And isn't that exactly the way you've behaved to me, from the time I entered your family?

BERN. (*aside*) Hang it. (*aloud*) Didn't you pretend that this business of my nephew and his wife had nothing whatever to do with you?

KITTY. On the contrary, did I not make their cause my own most warmly?

BERN. Blow me from a gun, ma'am! didn't you try to impose a sham faint upon me for a real one?

KITTY. The very reverse. I told you distinctly that it was not a real one and you wouldn't believe me.

SAM. (*coming forward*) Yes, yes, uncle. I can vouch for that. She certainly did tell you that distinctly.

BERN. Oh! you're there, sir, are you? So you've been behind the scenes all the while of course.

SAM. No, only behind the curtain. How are you, sir?

BERN. (*aside*) I don't know what the dickens to do. She's very pretty, begad. But am I to be trepanned into——

SAM. What have you got there, Kitty?

KITTY. Oh, such a beautiful letter of Uncle Joseph's. You must hear it.

SAM. By all means. I like his letters so much,—when he doesn't enclose money.

KITTY. May I read it to him, uncle?

BERN. (*aside*) Oh, confound that letter!

KITTY. Silence gives consent. Now, Sam, (*reads*) "Sir, Pardon the liberty I take in addressing you upon a subject with which you will no doubt consider that a stranger has no right to intermeddle. But I have, by accident, made the acquaintance of a most charming young lady, who, for no other fault than marrying the man she loved, has to her infinite sorrow, brought upon her husband the anger of a relation whose heir he supposed himself to be. That young lady is your connection;

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her husband is your nephew; the infuriated relation is—yourself."

SAM. Hear, hear! Very well put. The infuriated relation is himself. Good!

BERN. There, ma'am, surely that will do.

KITTY. (*reads*) "Now, sir, in the name of common charity——"

BERN. Stop, stop, madam, I can't stand this.

KITTY. (*still reading*) "Of mere justice——"

BERN. May I beg, Mrs. Gaythorne——

KITTY. (*reads*) "Of all the better feelings of our nature——"

BERN. Stop, my dear, for pity's sake. Confound me! I can't stand this. I might have held out but for that pernicious piece of manuscript. But now—hemmed in here, cut off there, I've no resource but unconditional surrender. There! I surrender.

KITTY. You do? Sam, Sam, uncle Joseph surrenders.

SAM. Does he? Then allow me to return you, sir, the (*holding out his hand*)

BERN. The what?

KITTY. THE SHILLING.

SAM. KITTY. COLONEL.

Curtain.

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Henry J. Byron was a Mark Archt.
in great favour with some managers as a wi
of effective dialogue. Unfortunately his
facility for all sorts of possible & impossi
word twisting & punning led him astra
Although an intelligent audience i
moved to laughter by the abourdest & mo
insane things, it is doubtful whether it
not at the same time conscious of losing
certain amount of self-respect. The
quantity of Byron's work seems to have
injured its quality. He had a power of
invention, a sense of humour & pathos
with real generality, & a manliness an
wholesomeness in tone that sh. have be
able to render his plays acceptable to
much higher class intellectually, than
for wh. he catered with such success. He c
write & did, some very admirable dialog
but it is not improbable that his ta
for writing rapidly & impulsively was th
means of his best things becoming lost
smothered, by very inferior conceipts & jo

* * He was not wanting in construct
ness like his contemporary - the author of
The Two Roses.

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